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The Royal actors

By Blair Worden

GRAHAM PARRY:

The Golden Age Restor'd
The Culture of the Stuart Court,
1603-42

276pp. Manchester University Press.
£22.50.
0 7190 0825 5

STEPHEN ORGEL:

The Jonsonian Masque

216pp. Columbia University Press.
\$29.95.
0 213 05370 3

Graham Parry's *The Golden Age Restor'd* is a distinguished and eloquent survey of the relationship between politics and the literary and visual arts in the reigns of James I and Charles I. A lecturer in English Literature, Parry crosses disciplinary frontiers with unconventional enthusiasm, and controls a wide range of material with notable lucidity and economy. His book has long been needed. Cultural propaganda and patronage, masques, the iconography of divine-right monarchy: these themes have been brilliantly illuminated by Frances Yates, Stephen Orgel and others, but newcomers to the period are often baffled by them or suppose them to be peripheral to major issues of literary development or political conflict. In Mr Parry, readers will find a courteous and exceptionally helpful guide. Manchester University Press, who have produced the book attractively and illustrated it generously, would perform a service to higher education by putting it into paperback at an accessible price. (They might also, while they were about it, persuade Parry to substitute a more reliable index.)

The Golden Age Restor'd was a Twelfth Night Court masque of 1615 by Ben Jonson. Its title, like that of Jonson's later masque *The Fortunate Isles*, recalls a neglected theme of early seventeenth-century politics. Posterity, viewing the period with one eye on the subsequent Puritan upheaval, too readily forgets the hopes of renewal which attended the accession of the Stuart dynasty and the pacific diplomacy of James I. Solving the succession problem which had so long overshadowed Eng-

lish politics, the Stuarts seemed - and were anxious to be thought - to offer stability and prosperity after the perennial anxieties and the tight-fisted patronage of Elizabeth's reign. England, set apart from the Continent both geographically and historically, could rejoice in its exemption from the Wars of Religion, and in the resilience, the intellectual distinction and the providential mission of its Church.

"And if any nation under heaven", claimed the Court chaplain Joseph Hall in 1613, "could either parallel or second Jerusalem in the favours of God, this poor little island of ours is it." All the rest of the world have been whirled about in these woful tumults; only this island like the centre hath stood unmovable... Whether should we ascribe it, but next under God, to his unointed, as a King, as a King of Peace? James, "like another Augustus, before the second coming of Christ hath becalmed the world, and shut the iron gates of war."

As Tudor iron was transmuted into Stuart gold, nationalist and classical legends - Brutus, the ancient (and now restored) unity of the British Isles, Virgilian prophecy, Astraea, Joseph of Arimathea, the Roman architecture of Arthurian Britain - fused in the mythology of the new regime. Ideology was supported by cultural acquisition. The Stuarts, to whom the prestige of their dynasty abroad was at least as important as its reputation at home, competed intensely against rival monarchs in architectural grandeur and in artistic collection. Charles's plan for a vast new Whitehall Palace to match the Escorial and the Louvre was frustrated by financial and political difficulties, but his collection of paintings, as Parry observes, "had an incomparable reputation, outshining the palace galleries of Paris, Madrid, Vienna, Prague and Brussels."

Like many Renaissance monarchs, James wanted to the image of himself as the new Augustus, beneath whose benevolent absolutism learning and the arts would flourish. Jonson quickly established himself as the spectators' understander of his death, Parry correctly senses "a sincere conviction that service under

eration mistrusts the dedication of the arts to the service of the state; but if Jonson and Jones flattered the Stuarts, they did so, as Jonson believed Horace to have flattered Augustus, on strict ethical terms. One strand of Parry's book is the gradual education of the Court and of the courtly nobility in the classical values, moral and aesthetic, which Jonson and Jones uncompromisingly preached. Jonson, exploring the tension between courtly service and the virtuous detachment of the Horatian country house, taught his patrons to measure their behaviour against the severity of the antique Roman nobility. Jones's work "was the first to



Inigo Jones, from an engraving by Van Dyck.

enable English princes and noblemen to look back across the ages to Rome with an equal eye... In the space of some twenty years, 1620-40, the growing body of Englishmen responsive to the arts became naturalized citizens of a baroque world filled with mythological personages and heroic activity.

Admittedly Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones faced an uphill struggle, even before the famous quarrel between them. The iconography of paintings and pageants, and the principles of scenic perspective and of Vitruvian architecture, were not universally appreciated. Jonson's quest "to make the spectators understanders" of his Jacobean masques was impeded by

moments of unintentional high comedy, when elaborately prepared scenes, performed before uncomprehending audiences, were missed or interrupted by a bored or intoxicated James. Not all princely and noble patronage was perceptive or edifying. Whenever art and learning become sources of political prestige, they will attract political patrons whose main concern is self-advertisement - as Parry believes the Duke of Buckingham's to have been, at least until the last years of his life.

Yet if art and learning were exploited, that is a tribute to the value which Stuart society placed upon them, and which made them exploitable. Much has been written about the economic interests and fortunes, and about the political in-fighting, of the early Stuart ruling class, for basic facts of greed and power are comprehensible to every age. Too little has been written about the more elusive (although amply documented) aesthetic and intellectual preoccupations of a worried aristocratic culture, and about the senatorial neo-stoicism which spread outwards from the Court, often in opposition to courtly policy and manners.

For no adequate account of Jacobean and Caroline politics can evade the questions raised by the discernment, the appetite, and the moral self-examination behind the patronage exercised by Prince Henry, by the Earl of Arundel, by the Herberts, the Sidneys and the Russells, and by many other noble and gentry families. Even a brief glance at the most prominent figures on Parry's broad and richly detailed canvas will indicate that the Jacobean elite need not have blushed to compare itself with the patrons of Augustan Rome.

Prince Henry, tutored by John Florio, modelled himself on Sir Philip Sidney and befriended and aided Sir Walter Raleigh. His court was a magnet to cultured and self-serious noblemen: his pictures and his library became the foundations of the great royal collections; and in the sermon which Joseph Hall preached before the Prince's household when it broke up after Henry's early death, Parry correctly senses "a sincere conviction that service under

the Prince of Wales had been a brief golden age." Among Henry's protégés were not only Jonson and Jones but Drayton, Selden, Harrington, Isaac Oliver and Salomon de Caus. There was Chapman, too: as Parry says, "What the translation of the Bible was to King James's Court, the translation of Homer was to Prince Henry's."

The Prince derived much of his patronage from his mother, Anne of Denmark, who initiated the Stuart masques, who gave Jones his first major commissions, and "whose avant-garde taste in the arts ought to be better recognized than it is". Her closest companion was Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the friend of Donne. At Twickenham, where "music flowed through her house" the Countess collected pictures, studied antique coins and medals, provided "a resort for the foremost poets of the time", and displayed the "advanced interest in garden design" shared by other leading Stuart patrons. She it was who prompted Florio to translate Montaigne, and she herself made a daring translation of Lucretius, who denied the immortality of the soul. Parry detects "an electric feeling in the air when her name is mentioned", and years for a contemporary account of the conversation which animated her household.

One of Parry's most illuminating chapters is devoted to the Earl of Arundel, foremost connoisseur and collector of the period, friend of Jones and Rubens and Hollar, patron of the physician William Harvey, of the mathematician William Oughtred, and of the historians William Camden and Henry Spelman. The range of Arundel's interests, which took his agents as far as the Eastern Mediterranean, is well known. Parry brings out the discrimination and expertise which lay behind them, and emphasizes the sophistication of the Earl's concern with the techniques of drawing and with inscriptions on marbles and statues. Arundel was "the forerunner of the great secular-minded aristocrats of the eighteenth century, who conceived that taste, judgement and scholarship are allied to conduct and morality, and who believed that the imaginative control

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

of paint, marble, precious stone or metal by the artists of pagan Greece and Rome, of Catholic Italy, Protestant Germany expresses a common aspiration to beauty and intellectual delight. But Parry discerns too the emotional intensity of that sober, gravely dressed figure, who studied the Stoics, and who asked in his will that a house be built on his Middlesex estate.

where six honest unmarried men might be honestly and well fed and clad, and have good commodity of books to study with, and convenient rooms to make all disillusions, physics, and surgery, to be given over for ever to the poor for charity, and no money to be taken for it. . . . I would have all their clothes ash coloured. As also could wish (if it might be) those of my family might mourn for me only in ash colour, in respect it is the colour of ashes into which my flesh is to dissolve.

The hospice was never built, for the Earl's stupendous expenditure on the arts had placed an insupportable burden on his estate. Clarendon, no friend of Arundel, acknowledged "the reverence of many towards him, as the image, and representative of the primitive nobility, and native gravity of the nobles, when they had been most venerable". Of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, another patron who impresses Parry, Clarendon observed that he was "the most universally beloved and esteemed man of that age. . . . Sure never man was planted in a Court, that was fitter for that soil, or brought better qualities with him to purify that air." These are characterizations to remember when we return to more customary images of early Stuart politics, which turn on the cynicism and seediness of the Court and on the provincialism of the parliaments, and which sometimes seem to tell us about every aspect of the seventeenth-century ruling class except its mind.

If taste was heavily influenced by noble families, its ultimate arbiters were the poets. Parry's book heightens the familiar contrast between the intellectual James and the aesthete Charles, between the aesthetic indebtedness to his tutor Buckhurst and the son's love of Van Dyck, who "condemns the way we view the Caroline Court" — and about whom Parry writes extremely well. In the last resort Parry prefers the father's Court to the son's. The robustness and the "intellectual openness" of Jacobean literature are compared with "the narrowing of imaginative scope and the diminished seriousness of purpose that afflicted Caroline courtly poetry". Jonson, the best of the passing generation, lost his foothold at Court in the 1630s; Milton, the best of the rising generation, never found one; Jonson's inventiveness declined as his foothold became more secure and as the "speculative and experimental energy" of Jacobean architecture and drama evaporated. "Literature written for the Court tended increasingly to be tailored to suit the prevailing taste, with the result that a contrived, artificial, repetitive note is too often struck. . . . Language grows less vigorous, and more affected as it breathes an overcourtly air."

Charles, the most moral of monarchs, sought to enhance the Order of the Garter and to publicize an "inspired cult of married love". Neither of these aspirations seems to have elicited memorable art or to have impressed his subjects. The marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria was lauded with a "facile Platonism" which "was the unofficial religion of the Court", and which "began in convention and rapidly dwindled into platitudes". Flattery of the King and Queen became indiscriminate and produced a "mental sterility" in the "tired admirer, the sycophant, the sycophant favoured by the atmosphere of Charles's Court."

Parry has a sharp eye for the King's weak spots, and Charles can certainly look ridiculous. Even so, the force of Parry's assessment is weakened by his judgements about the Caroline Court, his political strictures leave room for argument. He suggests that in the 1630s the Court "isolated itself from the threatening reality of politics and religion". Charles's "inability to grasp the mythological and cultural significance of the Caroline Court" is a charge which Parry does not substantiate.

relationships, seen most fully in the masques, lay at the centre of his state problems, and were symptomatic of the divorce between himself and the discontents of his reign. In Roman hall beneath his deified father, Charles was surrounded by the rhetoric of absolute power, but behind the rhetoric there lay no substance. The King's capacity for self-delusion was revealed in Aurelian Townshend's *Albion's Triumph* (1632), in which Charles was dressed as a Roman emperor, and in which "the heavens open to reveal Innocence, Justice, Religion, Affection to the Country, Concord and Peace exerting their influence over the city, and we learn that they have congregated in Britain because the land is ruled by this perfect combination of Virtue and Goodness, cemented by Love, the Mary-Charles". The King's plans for a new palace, which would have been well beyond his means, indicate "burgeoning megalomania".

Here Parry, whose feeling for historical context is usually so assured, has perhaps yielded to hindsight — although if so, he is in eminent company. Whether or not personal monarchy could have succeeded, its failure seems to have surprised Charles's opponents as much as the King himself. In any case, the idealized harmony sung by poets and playwrights may be better understood as the advertisement of an ideal than as a statement of reality. It is not self-evident that Charles succumbed to his own propaganda. Passages from Clarendon, Davenant and Bromelie, quoted by Parry to show that Charles's opponents were alive to the political dangers of a cultural divide between Court and country, might equally well be used as evidence that the Court was receptive to criticism and even to mockery by those authors. The anti-masque, too, amid the light relief which it doubtless afforded to courtiers yearning for the solemn central action, afforded opportunities for political dissent.

If the potential strength of Charles's personal monarchy is to be gauged — if we are to learn whether the Roman emperor had clothes when he was off stage — the boundaries of the Court and of its culture will need to be defined more clearly. We lack too (in an age which has so much to say about the vocabulary of opposition and protest) a study of those largely instinctive and largely unspoken responses to authority and kingship on which the Baroque monarchies were built in Europe, and of which Charles sought to take advantage in England. Parry acknowledges that "the scale, intensity and complexity of the Baroque before the Civil War may be partly explained by the existence of a vital belief in the immeasurable and faithful influence of royal power", and concedes that the poems of Thomas Carew, which he believes to have "contributed greatly" to the Court's "false feelings of security and peace", "are not the mechanical tributes of a Court servant but fresh, vigorous acts of worship for Carew like Jonson responded to the mysterious divinity of kingship as other men did to the reality of religious power in their lives: it was an irresistible, incontrovertible, impalpable fact that demanded recognition and praise."

Parry has a penchant for instructive religious analogies. In another of them he compares the masque, which "gave visual expression to the secret and sublime operation of majesty" with the Mass: "the rituals of the ceremony, the formulae, the instruments employed, even the vestments of the celebrants bear witness to certain truths and have a symbolic significance which is only partially understood by those who attend. The central purpose is clear: the rituals are powerful and suggestive, beyond the level of rationality, the meaning of the symbolism can be known in detail by those who desire, but a limited understanding of the theological significance of the words, actions and instruments does not impair the efficacy of the ceremony."

The parallel is especially apposite since, as Orgel and Roy Strong observe in their study of Inigo Jones, the masque was a "visual and sensory agency, which, on the Continent, were

channelled into the Counter-Reformation, were perforce directed, in Protestant England, into the secular aspirations of the Court. So we might expect a wealth of contemporary comment to support the view that the Civil War was, at one level, a conflict between a sensual, Popish, international culture and an inconceivable, Puritan, insular one. Yet is the evidence there? I do not remember masques among the complaints of the Grand Remonstrance. The relief with which those future Roundheads Bulstrode Whitelocke and John Selden disowned William Prynne's stage appearances, and threw themselves into the preparation of Shirley's *The Triumph of Peace* for the Court in 1634, reminds us that the genre did not appeal exclusively to Cavalier sensibilities, and that many years were to pass before England became two nations, either politically or culturally.

In its treatment of the masque, one glimpses the point beyond which this intelligent and attractively written book cannot take us. Parry's powers are shown to best advantage in description. What he rarely does is to take us inside an artist's mind and to show us the process of creation. Without such help, we are like a drama of which the essence was not conflict but wonder. (We are also likely to be surprised by the money the Stuarts were prepared to spend on it, although too much to be made of this: a handsome masque could be had for £1,000 in the 1630s; paintings and jewels cost the crown much more.) It is profitable to read Parry's book alongside Orgel's classic work *The Jonsonian Masque* (1965), which has now been republished with a brief new preface. Orgel has much to say about politics than Parry. Yet, by showing how Jonson exorcised a source of awe and delight, he enables us to understand why the masque, when it worked, was like a contemporary who provided the finest evocation of the King whose imagery appropriate to the leading player of the 1630s masques: "the Royal Actor born", who adorned "The Tragic Scaffold", and who "nothing common did or mean / Upon that memorable Scene."

Parry's readers will not learn, as will Orgel's, to tell a good masque from a bad one. But are the good masques as good as they have recently been made out to be? Orgel and Roy Strong enjoyably complain of

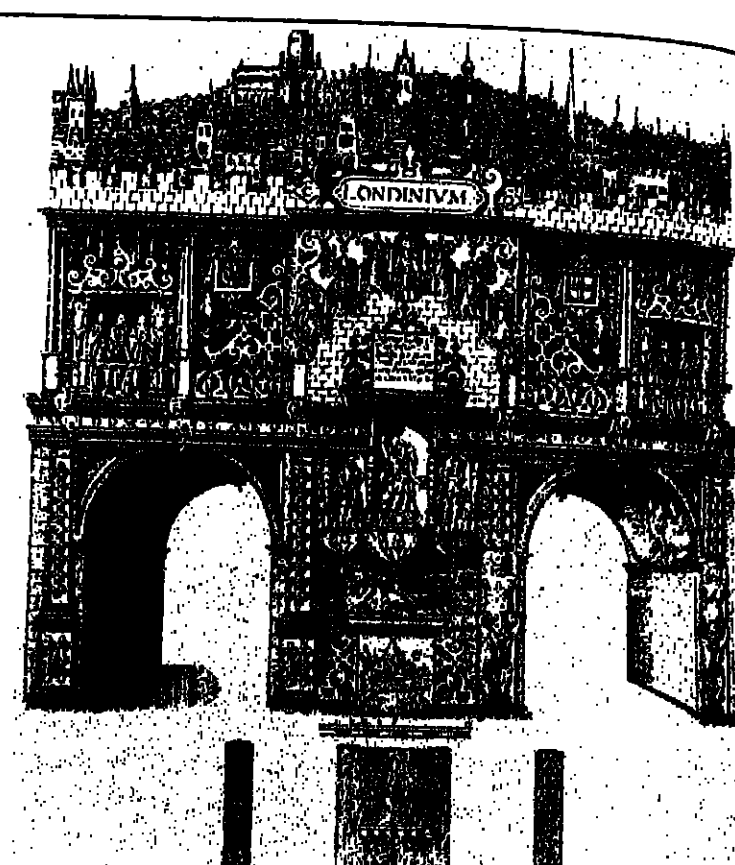
Primal scenery

By Sarah Wintle

ARTHUR KIRSCH:
Shakespeare and the Experience of Love
194pp. Cambridge University Press.
£16.95. 0 521 23825 0

Bottom's "I have had a dream" is made more exhilaratingly and profoundly comic if we are aware of its allusion to St Paul. Such an allusion does not, however, make *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a Christian play. In adopting Christian and Freudian approaches to Shakespeare, Arthur Kirsch is anxious not to be "disparagingly reductive, doctrinaire and remote from literary experience". But he courts another danger; for while such approaches may offer incidental insights into particular characters or actions, they do not necessarily provide a wider framework for a reading of the work in question.

Shakespeare's treatment of "the experience of love" is illustrated by five plays — *Othello*, the comedies, or tragicomedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Cymbeline*. The action of these plays expresses "the most civilized as well as primitive of our erotic yearnings and shows us how much the realization of our humanity consists in the development of our capacity for person-to-person relationships. Kirsch's readings are instinctively moral and generalizing: Freudian and Christian ideas



Designed by Ben Jonson, the Londinium Arch was one of seven erected to mark James I's triumphal progress through London in March 1604. The illustration is reproduced from the book under review.

the assumption that kings, although their characters needed to be educated and understood, were ideals before they were people; personifications before they were persons; players of parts in politics as in masques. The depth of that assumption was shown in the Civil War, when Parliament, driven at last to distinguish between the office and the person of the monarch, found that it lacked a vocabulary with which to do so. No one in the 1640s knew how to write about Charles I as a man. Parry's final paragraph reminds us that the contemporary who provided the finest evocation of the King whose imagery appropriate to the leading player of the 1630s masques: "the Royal Actor born", who adorned "The Tragic Scaffold", and who "nothing common did or mean / Upon that memorable Scene."

Parry's readers will not learn, as will Orgel's, to tell a good masque from a bad one. But are the good masques as good as they have recently been made out to be? Orgel and Roy Strong enjoyably complain of

are perceived as analogous or even equivalent, although the different plays demand, and to some extent get, a varied doctrinal emphasis.

A number of Freudian texts and ideas are thoughtfully referred to. Othello, for example, moves in "the polarized, erotic universe" described in Freud's paper *The Most Prevalent Form of Degeneration in Erotic Life*, in part a projection of Othello's unconscious aggression against himself. Othello achieves tragic status precisely because of the way in which his suffering is so openly and directly powered by its sources in the structured instinctual energies of Freudian theory — guilt, aggression, narcissism.

But such a method must work hard at accommodating theory to text. "Primal" is one of Professor Kirsch's favourite words of praise, and it puts in a lot of overtime. In the chapter on *Much Ado*, a parallel is set up between the Pauline notion of love and the Pauline notion of the structured instinctual energies of Freudian theory — guilt, aggression, narcissism.

The pleasure they achieve in their double entendres — and give to us — thus begins to integrate their feelings, because in returning them to the primal source of wit it also returns them to the primal source of love itself: that period in life in which . . . pleasure is simple and direct and narcissistic. The problems, because the ego and the object are indistinguishable.

In order to harmonize the "primordial" with the supposed Christian orthodoxy of that familiar phantom, the Elizabethan audience," Kirsch

The romantic Member for Jarrow

By Kenneth O. Morgan

BETTY D. VERNON:
Ellen Wilkinson
1891-1947
254pp. Croom Helm. £14.95.
0 85664 984 8

Ellen Wilkinson was arguably Britain's most important woman politician. Of course, she did not attain Mrs Thatcher's supreme position, and never looked like doing so. She did not have the executive flair of Barbara Castle, nor was she over-endowed with the all-weather sentimentality with which a glib press has currently drowned Shirley Williams. For all that, in the years down to 1945, when she became Minister of Education in Attlee's government, Ellen Wilkinson made the role of women in high politics credible and effective as no one has done before or since, with powerful consequences both for her sex and her class. As trade-union organizer, as parliamentarian, as journalist and international publicist, as a major figure on Labour's national executive, above all as inspirational stump orator and all-purpose crusader, she placed an indelible stamp on the public mind. She was uniquely identified with the passions of the 1930s, with anti-fascist campaigns, with the popular front movements, above all with the outcry against mass unemployment and poverty. Her involvement with the march from Jarrow, the town she represented in parliament from 1935 onwards, and her remarkable *Left Book Club* tract "The Town that was Murdered" — a dramatic, perhaps decisive, impact on the public conscience, long before the new egalitarian consensus of the Second World War. The last phase at the Education Office in 1945-47 was less impressive, even anti-climactic, though it is reasonable to suggest that her early death at 55 cut her off at her political prime. Her life-long career as champion of the disinherited is largely forgotten, like much else of the early Labour movement. It is right that it should be celebrated now, at a time of renewed turmoil within the British left.

Betty D. Vernon's brief biography has its limitations, some by no means the author's fault. Like other members of the Attlee government (Bevin, Morrison and Bevan all included), Ellen Wilkinson seems to have left virtually no private papers. There are thus major gaps in the story, which the author tends to fill with generalized summaries of the history of British labour or of women's movements in general. Important aspects, such as Ellen Wilkinson's views on non-educational issues during the Attlee government, are ignored. Nevertheless, this modest, unpretentious, clearly-written study contains much illuminating information, while its fair-minded, unhectored tone carries conviction.

The lack of archival material has been partially redressed by much use of interview evidence: Michael Foot, Fenner Brockway and the late Margaret Cole appear to have been amongst the most helpful here. Apart from documenting Ellen Wilkinson's public activities, Ms Vernon sheds new light on her mercurial, colourful, even wilful personality. It soon becomes clear that the grey, arthritic, Methodist world in which she was brought up in Manchester was left only a slight imprint on her character and outlook. She was an outgoing, red-haired romantic, who passionately released her emotions in some rather curious novels and in a tussle with her father for her freedom. There is a reminiscence of some of the more baroque pages of Mrs Castle's diaries. It is evident, too, that Ellen Wilkinson's passionate nature overflowed into a complicated maze of personal relations. Among the various men with whom she had a close attachment were Walton Newbold, the first Communist MP (to whom she was briefly, and disastrously, engaged), a Yorkshire miner's agent; a Czech propagandist; Frank Horne, the socialist cartoonist and jour-

nalist; and, most remarkably and enduringly of all, Herbert Morrison.

Ellen Wilkinson was, at least until the Second World War, usually identified with the far left, Morrison with the Tammany right. Yet their friendship became increasingly close from 1931 onwards. Apart from personal attraction, she seems to have admired Morrison as a charismatic organizer and man of action, of impeccable working-class origins. Morrison's biographers, Bernard Donoghue and George Jones, have concluded that Ellen was probably not Morrison's mistress; Ms Vernon seems to conclude that she probably was. The point is of scant importance either way, save to underline Ellen's close involvement in Morrison's political progress in the 1930s, and her efforts to promote him as leader in 1935, 1939 and 1945 (shortly after the election results were known). The relationship has remained decently veiled. Morrison does not refer to Ellen in his autobiography. In 1947 he failed even to send flowers to her funeral. Yet in the complex and ambiguous strands that made up the British Labour movement in the years of consolidation after 1931, the Morrison-Wilkinson affair is worth its modest historical niche.

Ellen Wilkinson's emergence as a leading socialist in the years down to 1931 (when she was forty) in many ways seems typical of its time. There was the conversion to a messianic form of ethical socialism, after a brisk read through of Morris and Blatchford. There was the inevitable membership of the ILP with the influence on her of Bruce Glasier and his remarkable wife, Katharine. There were the crusades against the First World War, followed by a flirtation with the newly-formed Communist Party. Later came predictable phases of political activism, election to Manchester city council, involvement in the Labour research department, and finally election as Labour MP for Middlesbrough East in 1924. It was a classic progress for a socialist pilgrim, rudely shattered by electoral defeat following the formation of the National government under MacDonald in 1931.

Yet there are some features which lift Ellen Wilkinson's career out of the ordinary. There was the unusual enduring impact of Methodism, a lifelong commitment, not merely a

phase of adolescent revivalism as it was with so many Labour pioneers. There was her extensive higher education, including the gaining of an upper second degree in history at Manchester University under the great T. S. Eliot. (Did young Ellen, one wonders, come into contact with T. S. Eliot's suffragette wife?) There was her astonishing appointment as women's organizer of the Co-operative employees in 1915, at the tender age of twenty-four. There was an amazingly eclectic association with almost every known species of Labour activism from the Fabians to the Labour College movement. Finally and most important, there was the extraordinary fact that Ellen's personal charisma transcended her apparent basic disqualification as a mere woman. Even in the earthy male stronghold of the steel town of Middlesbrough, her qualities ensured her nomination as Labour candidate in 1924. She confirmed her toughness and resilience during the General Strike. Despite the debacle of 1931 — and a record of some instability including a brief flirtation with Oswald Mosley's panacea for economic recovery — it is apparent that Ellen Wilkinson's political reputation was firmly established by the time of her parliamentary defeat in the 1931 election.

The 1930s were her golden age. On the face of it, she was identified with a succession of lost causes — the Socialist League, the Unity Front, the League of Nations, for a while, a sequence of rightist and anti-fascist or quasi-pacifist movements during the period of Spain and Munich. Yet it is transcendently clear that Ellen was vital in giving new inspiration and zest to Labour throughout the decade. In passing, it may be noted that her career suggests that the Labour left was less introspective and ineffective in the 1930s than some recent accounts have argued. Jarrow and the Left Book Club expressed her genius as an agitator and propagandist, for a while, did *Tribune*. But she demonstrated a new realism and tough-mindedness, too, especially in her renewed commitment to the parliamentary wing of the labour movement. Although of the ILP, she never lapsed into the sectarianism of Maxton and his Scottish comrades. Although an advocate of the unity front; she would not undermine the party by blind adherence to the cause of Stafford Cripps.

She left the board of *Tribune* in March 1939, perhaps just in time. With her personal friendships with cross-party associates such as Boothby and Macmillan, she was an ideal representative of the new popular consensus that emerged after the outbreak of war in 1939. At the Home Office under Morrison, she displayed new and unsuspected qualities of executive drive, notably in marshalling civil defence during the Blitz. These were years, too, that reinforced a growing gut repugnance to communism. In July 1945, she gained Cabinet office on her own merits, not just as a recent party chairman, or a relentless intriguer on behalf of the leadership claims of Morrison.

Her period at the Education department until her death in February 1947 has often been attacked for its inertia and institutional conservatism. Certainly she did little to promote the cause of multilateral forms of secondary schooling, while her handling of private and direct-grant schools was noticeably cautious. A group of left-wing teachers, headed by the Weblman W. G. Cove, launched bitter attacks on her in her last few months, and subsequently on her successor, George Tomlinson. In fact, Ellen Wilkinson's policy was predetermined by the passage of the monumental Butler Act in 1944: the Labour minister could merely attempt to work it as effectively and humanely as possible. Nor does her deep attachment to the grammar schools as a unique channel of working-class advancement seem so absurd now, following the chaos surrounding the comprehensive experiment in many urban areas. In the light of the political and financial restraints that hedged about Labour's priorities in 1945, her record seems less negative, while she did force through the raising of the school-leaving age in the face of opposition from the treasury ministers and (ironically) from Morrison himself. As a Cabinet minister, she was neither radical nor inspired, but even the last phase is far from being wholly to her discredit.

Ellen Wilkinson's main importance lies in the way she helped translate the passions of the 1930s into the experience of power from 1940 onwards. It was the inspirational side of the 1930s that she embodied, as the kind of British La Pasionaria she was so often represented as being.

She was a man of letters, and moved into the middle classes through football as he might have done through colliery management. Like many successful managers, he was no great shakes as a player: "sturdily built and takes a lot of knocking off the ball" (*Grimby Gazette*) was one of his better notices. His skill lay in taking a serious managerial approach to football clubs which had hitherto been run in a casual fashion by their directors, with the secretary-manager exercising little real control. In his great years with Huddersfield and Arsenal, between 1921 and 1934, he shaped the role of the modern manager by his attention to every aspect of the game, including publicity, promotion, and crowd comfort as well as team management.

Chapman was ahead of his time in his concern for ground improvements and youth coaching and his advocacy of innovations like floodlit matches, and numbering of teams. His real secret, however, lay in his treatment of players as both responsible and sensitive individuals. He does not seem to have been remarkable for inventiveness in player methods, where he is best remembered for the "stopper" centre-half, though Stephen Studd defends him against the charge of encouraging negative football and points out how the Arsenal of the 1930s developed the swift transition from defence to attack with Alex James at the mid-field link. His forte was inspiring new confidence and self-esteem in the professional player. He once denounced barroom-brawling professional players, like artists, as highly

The tougher, more intellectual aspects of Labour's experience in that decade — the new policies that flowered in the 1937 interim programme; the new economic ideas maturing in the XYZ club and in the group of young economists brought together by Dalton; the more informed understanding of international relations which Bevin, among others, reflected; the development policies for the colonies associated with Creech-Jones and Rita Hinden — passed Ellen Wilkinson by. Yet she remained unique as a voice for social justice in her generation. Further, in just as a recent party chairman, or a relentless intriguer on behalf of the leadership claims of Morrison.

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Mr Studd tells the story well and sets Chapman's career in the context of the game's development into a major industry. It is hardly his fault that from newspapers and recollections we cannot quite recapture how Huddersfield played in the 1920s or how Chapman exerted his influence over players. There is little about the private side of Chapman, no doubt because he never revealed much of it. Outside football, he appeared very ordinary. Perhaps the effort of getting out and staying out of the working class left no time for the development of a personality. In photographs taken shortly before his death in 1934, he looks prematurely aged by his work. Yet, in plus-fours, about to take an aeroplane to Paris for a match with the Racing Club, he looks as though he had reached his destination. Football in the end was a vehicle. Asked for his finest hour, he chose none of the League championship and FA Cup victories won by Huddersfield and Arsenal but "when my son, qualified as a solicitor."

The managerial revolution

By Paul Smith

STEPHEN STUDD:
Herbert Chapman: Football Emperor
A Study in the Origins of Modern Soccer
160pp. Peter Owen. £8.50.
0 7206 0581 4

The career of Herbert Chapman reminds us how quickly elementary education and the growth of a mass entertainment industry turned the world of Keir Hardie into that of Kevin Keegan. Born the son of an illiterate miner in 1878, within fifty years he was manager of the Arsenal at a salary of £2,000, writing a weekly column in the *Sunday Express*, and enjoying with his players the benefit of police motor-cycle escorts and the other exaggerated attentions which society pays to those who demonstrate the possibility of life after work — or, even without work, as usually conceived. In Highbury stand his monuments still — the tube station which he had renamed "Arsenal", as well as the ground, with its famous clock and its "sun-ray" stand, as redolent of the 1930s as the Firestone facade used to be and Hoover's Perivale factory still is. The relatively opulent Arsenal of Chapman's day witnessed to the fact that even for the professional footballer wandering in marble halls was no longer necessarily a dream.

That almost unstoppable force, a shrewd Yorkshireman on the rise, Chapman gained a mining engineer's

diploma, married a teacher, and moved into the middle classes through football as he might have done through colliery management. Like many successful managers, he was no great shakes as a player: "sturdily built and takes a lot of knocking off the ball" (*Grimby Gazette*) was one of his better notices. His skill lay in taking a serious managerial approach to football clubs which had hitherto been run in a casual fashion by their directors, with the secretary-manager exercising little real control. In his great years with Huddersfield and Arsenal, between 1921 and 1934, he shaped the role of the modern manager by his attention to every aspect of the game, including publicity, promotion, and crowd comfort as well as team management.

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Non-genetic mutations

By Mary Midgley

E. J. JENSEN and R. HARRÉ
(Editors)
The Philosophy of Evolution
300pp. Brighton: Harvester. £22.50.
0 7108 0072 X

Is there something which can be called "social evolution" in the strict Darwinian sense – a social process with a mechanism corresponding to genetic mutation and natural selection? An increasing number of social scientists seem at present to assume this with some confidence. They do not just mean that imagery of this sort is sometimes useful, but that the whole set of evolutionary concepts applies as literally and directly – even if with some differences of detail – to social as to biological change.

Now since there are no literal "genes" involved, this is not a true extension of biological theory. It has to be a parallel or metaphor. As such, it has crushing faults, the most serious of which concerns the origin of change. Genetic mutations are essentially random and unintelligible. But in human history, beginnings are not necessarily any harder to understand than middles and ends. There are no hidden entities that must be assumed to account for them: no genes. However sudden and striking a change may be, we can always ask what led up to it and made it necessary, how the need was recognized, what confusions people fell into about it, what materials the innovators used, what kind of appeal the change had for them, and how they thought of it in relation to the possible alternatives. Because people are so interested in changes, there is often plenty of evidence on these points.

Historians therefore get a lot of practice in handling this sort of evidence, and have learnt a good deal about the pitfalls involved. And in fact they succeed in tackling this kind of question as well as any other. Our position inside our own species supplies the materials which they use, and which are denied to the biologist studying remote ones. To reject this material because biologists cannot handle it would be perverse cancellation. If we insist on using the model of genetic evolution for human history, our meaning surely can only be that historians have no business to be having this sort of success, and ought in future to stop attempting to explain such cases. Thus we would triumphantly import a load of gratuitous ignorance into history, from an area of biology where that ignorance may anyway be only temporary, since further discoveries may further explain genetic change.

For what advantage is this price paid? Evidently it is conceived as establishing scientific status. As one author in this collection puts it, the question is "how is a scientific sociology possible?" Only, he thinks, by the use of this model. But, seeing its extreme awkwardness, he suggests a number of patches to cover the most obvious holes, and decides that when these are in place, "social evolution" will take on a new meaning, just as "mass" has done in twentieth-century physics. As the theory gradually severs its connections with the parent source, and comes to acquire an autonomous life of its own. But why is so obviously faulty a model worth using at all? The point, no doubt, is to bridge the gap between physical science and history by "providing history with timeless universal laws." Repeatedly, people have tried to do this by extending such laws, and we are familiar by now with the results they get. Some of the extensions will give us intriguing suggestions, many will be vicious, and some plainly false. History neither needs nor allows such treatment. Its own methods – involving the systematic and disciplined use of mutually correcting analogies – are quite enough to make it scientific in the only sense that matters, namely as a good source of knowledge. Can

tainly it is not very like physics, but then neither is biology. And the mere appearance of copying from physical science, which the evolutionary model offers, is worth nothing as a mark of scientific method. If sociology wants to tackle change, it has to operate as social history.

The contributors to this book show great care and sensitivity in their attempts to make sense of the model. And that tireless clearer of rebarbative terrains, Rom Harré, shows a sharper consciousness than the rest of the real problems by attacking the gene question directly. He sees that the social analogues of genes cannot possibly be (as Richard Dawkins suggested in *The Selfish Gene*) actual elements in culture, "tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions" and the like, because these are not hidden causes; they are parts of the social phenotype itself. Instead, Harré suggests that they are *rules*. But why assume any hidden entities at all? The case is not like that of unconscious motives, where we already have a good explanatory system, but there are gaps in it and reasons for filling them one way rather than another. Harré is inserting a whole new ontological range. His rules are not just another part of the system of rules which we already follow and express. These expressed rules are not hidden, they too are part of the phenotype. Even rules which we follow unconsciously – for instance, in using language – are still parts of that system. Though unrecognized, they are shown in behaviour. They are not a whole special order of entities, inferred, as genes originally were, simply to explain change. And Harré's rules cannot explain change. For instance, if on the ordinary visible scene of history a new moral or legal rule appears, how will it help our understanding of it to infer a hidden fur-

ther rule, whose random mutation has given rise to it? This is a dead end for thought. What we would normally do would be to ask what other tastes and interests have given rise to the new rule, and by what stages they have done so.

Ways of living and thinking, unlike genes, change gradually and continuously. And though we so often waste our opportunities, there is nothing to stop us keeping track of the whole process. Of course our actual explanations are scrappy, and the hope of something more complete is partly what moves those who want a quite new procedure. But all explanations are incomplete. It is true, too, that there is something specially mysterious about innovation and originality. But this mystery is not the blank, boring unintelligibility of the random. It is the complex, lasting elusiveness of the creative. Many good explanations can be given of such matters, and can instruct us, but they will not satisfy us because we always want more. But that is no reason for rejecting the lot. The inside view which we have of the life of our own species really does give us these extra sources of evidence, and it would be absurd to ignore them.

I am sorry if it seems ungracious to give so much space to this point in reviewing what is actually quite an interesting book, but it could have been so much more interesting if it had not revolved round this axis, and I was so disappointed by this limitation, that a passing howl seems justified. What I hoped for, in a book dealing with the relation between biological and social evolution, was a discussion of the innate bases of culture, and of the way in which biological ways of thinking about our natural tendencies can be combined with the methods of the natural sciences, instead of being taken to com-

pete with them. There are real clashes to be resolved here, and an attempt to find formal parallels is no help for them.

What the book does supply is scrupulous correction of the wilder forms of the evolutionary analogy, and serious attempts to make it work. Some of the essays have an extra interest in that they are by Danish scholars, who use great ingenuity in fitting the Darwinist scheme to the Marxist one. There are also some useful discussions of the controversy about "units of selection" in biological evolution, suggesting (surely correctly) that it arises from confusion; there does not have to be just one unit. And the best essays here (by J. Mittelstrasse and W. Newton Smith) concern what may be the only case where the evolutionary analogy has been seriously applied to culture – one where, instructively, it has simply broken down. This is the Popperian

attempt to show the development of science as a pure selection process, among randomly generated hypotheses. No doubt it was worth trying after the use of much paper and ink. But the hypotheses do not come out of thin air. Also, that, since we have chosen between them ourselves, we do so by using them in the most ways, to call the selection "natural" only encourage laziness, and false, confused fatalism. And of these there is enough already.

Should things not stop there? The inertia of such models is frightening. Unless somebody clothes them, they go on absorbing time and energy, and generating PhDs indefinitely. Will somebody with some powers – I would like to say Rom Harré himself – put forward the suggestion that this emperor has no clothes?

Ethics for the underdog

By L. W. Sumner

BERNARD E. ROLLIN:
Animal Rights and Human Morality
182pp. New York: Prometheus Books. \$17.95 (paperback, \$9.95).
0 87975 164 9

After centuries of malign neglect animals have of late begun to find some philosophical friends. Apart from a few curmudgeons – philosophers are unanimous about *nothing* – there now exists widespread agreement that sentient animals at least must be included within the moral domain. They are not *things* which we may manipulate at will for our own purposes; if our dealings with them are to be morally defensible we must acknowledge them as beings whose interests matter in their own right. While the full implications of this conclusion for the many human practices which involve animals remain still to be traced, the moral irrelevance of a creature's species is now as firmly established as the moral irrelevance of its race or sex.

There remain, however, two tasks which philosophers are well qualified to perform. The first lies squarely within their traditional territory. While it may be clear that animals have moral standing, it is less clear why they have this standing (the same is true of many other moral convictions) and also what form this standing takes. Selecting an interpretation of moral standing and constructing an appropriate criterion for it both require a moral theory. The case for extending moral concern to animals will therefore not be intellectually secure until we have such a theory. Only philosophers can provide it.

The other task is advocacy of the cause of animal welfare in the public arena. Effective advocacy requires, among other things, an unflinching case. Philosophers are not the only effective advocates, but their skill at constructing a reasoned argument does confer an advantage on them in this less traditional pursuit. They must, however, be prepared to do their empirical homework, and to tolerate a real world which is a good deal messier than the realms of theory.

Bernard Rollin's *Animal Rights and Human Morality* is intended both as philosophical analysis and as practical advocacy. It is divided into four parts, the first two given to constructing a moral framework which will establish that animals have rights and the last two devoted to applying this framework to the treatment of research animals and household pets.

As advocacy the book works well, and it may be unreservedly recommended to non-philosophical readers who wish to clarify their own views on the plight of animals. Its language is by and large non-technical and accessible. Its arguments are efficiently deployed and

frequently illustrated by cases and anecdotes. The survey of the uses of animals in research, the testing of consumables, and the extraction of products is comprehensive and illuminating, though also distressing. The book's usefulness as a handbook for successful lobbying is compromised only by its inept lack of an index.

The measures which Rollin proposes for ameliorating the lot of search animals and household pets are refreshingly sensible and well supported. Although they are, as he recognizes, only minimal standards and thus leave much more to be accomplished, their adoption would greatly reduce the current animal toll of death and suffering. In the long run quiet and persistent pressure by the adoption of measures which, because they are moderate, are obviously just, will probably do more for the protection of animals than the more vocal and hysterical demands of the lunatic fringe of the animal welfare movement.

Philosophers, however, will find Rollin's theoretical contributions less impressive. The main problem here is the book's central philosophical thesis that animals have rights. Moral rights are one form, or one interpretation, of moral standing. What it is clear that animals have (some form of) moral standing, it is less clear that this fact is well explained (or explained) by attributing rights to them. Imagine any case you please in which an animal is being abused or exploited (readers lacking imagination may consult Rollin's book for abundant examples). You will want to say that this treatment of the animal is wrong, or unjustifiable, or monstrous. Will you also want to say that it violates the animal's rights? If you do say this, are you pointing to a further fact which explains why the treatment is wrong? Are you, indeed, pointing to a further fact at all, or simply paraphrasing your original assessment?

In addition to the case for extending animals moral standing, a separate case must be made for assigning them rights. Rollin's argument moves much too swiftly from the former claim to the latter, a mistake committed with annoying frequency by American philosophers whose political heritage encourages the assumption that rights are the international currency of the moral world. Rollin devotes too little attention to explicating the concept of a right for it to be clear whether the concept actually plays any essential role in his arguments (there are some signs that it does not). When we better understand what moral rights are it may well turn out that animals, while they have moral standing, do not have this particular form of standing. If so, then the case for including animals in the moral domain is actually weakened by attributing rights to them. After centuries of understatement of the case, we must resist the temptation to overstate it.

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The panacea of the poppy

By Alethea Hayter

VIRGINIA BERRIDGE and GRIFFITH EDWARDS

Opium and the People
Opiate Use in Nineteenth-century England

370pp. Allen Lane/St Martin's Press.
£20.
0 7139 0852 1

"Narcotics have been a scapegoat for wider tensions within society" in this rather awkward mixed metaphor — the authors of *Opium and the People* outline their theme. The use of opium should be viewed in its social and historical context, as part of the "popular culture" of the deprived working class in nineteenth-century England, condemned to self-medication because it had little access to professional medical help. Present-day legislation, restriction and control of drug use, and the assumptions on which these are based, are a product of special conditions in the last century and are not necessarily of universal application.

In support of this thesis Virginia Berridge (author of seventeen of the book's eighteen chapters) has undertaken admirably thorough research — in chemists' prescription books, medical journals, mortality statistics, import trade returns, records of court proceedings, results of official inquiries and commissions, drafts of legislation — into the supply and demand of opium. Supplies were not only imported from Turkey and Persia, but produced within the country. Opium poppies, indigenous to Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, were cultivated experimentally from Edinburgh to Buckinghamshire, and the cultivation was encouraged by prizes and medals from learned societies. At the beginning of the nineteenth century opium was distributed mainly through little corner-shops of all kinds; it was sold by tailors and basket-makers, bakers and shoe-makers, on market-stalls and in pubs, as well as by chemists. The growth of legislative control of opium use, and the theories and motives of those who advocated or opposed it, are meticulously charted in this study. The fluctuating fortunes of the organizations which, shocked by Britain's opium wars with China to secure Indian opium exports, campaigned to suppress the opium trade are reported in exhaustive detail. On all these points *Opium and the People* will be a rich mine for future surveys of the Victorian social and medical terrain.

Throughout history, and until the middle of the nineteenth century, it is suggested, opium was not merely the doctors' most valued tool, but a normal means of self-medication for the lower classes who could not afford doctors. The dangers of over-dosing were known, but moderate use was taken for granted; there was no "drug problem". Thus regarded, opium may well have been mainly harmless and sometimes even beneficial; it helped overtaxed workers to carry on; its soothing effect on babies not merely enabled their mothers to get out to work and earn much-needed money, but perhaps also eased the babies' digestive complaints caused by poor nutrition. Its widespread traditional use in the Persians demonstrated how a population could succeed in controlling by informal social mechanisms its consumption of the drug with only minimal medical and legislative intervention. This reassuring picture makes the reader feel that in describing religion as the opium of the people, Marx was not so much a rude as he intended; what he was comparing it with was a form of working-class self-help.

In circumstances of hardship and poverty-induced disease, a sensible palliative for the evils inflicted by society — a mild analgesic for rather than an executioner of religion.

How then did this self-regulating "popular culture" become the subject of legislation as a moral evil, and of condemnation as a disease?

Partly, it is suggested, because it encountered the rising ambition of doctors and pharmacists to establish their professional status by strengthening their control over all forms of medical treatment. It was in their interest to exaggerate the dangers of uncontrolled distribution of drugs. In the last half of the nineteenth century, addiction to opium and its derivative morphine began to be considered and treated as a disease, due to hereditary or moral weakness, not simply as a bad habit produced by poor social conditions. Virginia Berridge suggests that this attitude was based on middle-class doctors' experience of well-to-do morphine addicts, not on a real understanding of working-class opium use.

Class-war theories play a considerable part in this study. There are frequent suggestions that opium addiction was condemned in hard-pressed manual labourers but condoned in the leisured classes, and that the condemnation was partly due to "fear of the working classes getting out of hand". "Implicit in the campaign against it" (the dosing of working-class infants with opium) "was class interest and a desire to remould popular culture into a more acceptable form". The evidence which Virginia Berridge herself provides does not really support the thesis that in opium addiction, too, there was one law for the poor and another for the rich. The public concern which she cites over the deaths of earls, bishops, MPs and other upper-class characters (including one surgeon meticulously placed in the social hierarchy as "nephew of a baron"), either from voluntary addition or from mistaken administration of a drug too readily available in every household, shows that it was not only lower-class opium use that was reprobated. The *Lancet* was particularly severe on its use by idle ladies: "Given a member of the weaker sex of the upper or middle class, enfeebled by a long illness, but selfishly fond of pleasure, and determined to purchase it at any cost, there are the syringe, the bottle, and the measure invitingly to hand, and all so small as to be easily concealed, from the eye of prying domestics". This exquisitely mid-Victorian verbal vignette is wittily reinforced, by an illustration from a French journal showing a sultry lady in a

bustle injecting morphine into her arm, while another crumpled lady is already sprawling in a coma on a padded sofa.

The factual evidence and documentation in this mainly admirable book are perhaps more valuable than the sociological conclusions drawn from them, which sometimes seem rather aridly unrelated to individual human experience. It claims to use "the actual experience of people living at the time", but the experience quoted is mostly that of the suppliers of opium, not of its consumers; we hear little of why the latter took opium, and what it did — or what they thought it did — for them. When, exceptionally, medical records or court cases are quoted, the theoretical analysis suddenly comes alive and the realities of the popular culture stand out. Mary Colton, a Nottingham lace-runner, is advised by her neighbours to give increased doses of laudanum to her four-month-old illegitimate child "to bring it on, as it did other children". Thomas Jones, an inebriate "gentleman's coachman", admitted to King's College Hospital because he sees "devils running about", is treated with porter, beef tea, brandy, and laudanum every three hours. A Fenland doctor, puzzled by a patient's symptoms, is enlightened by an accompanying friend: "Lor, Sir, she has had a shilling's worth of laudanum since yesterday morning". "One surgeon was horrified to find that his dog had swallowed a batch of morphia suppositories made with mutton fat". But individual case-histories play little part in this book, which leaves us still unsure of the human motives behind the popular culture.

Those who are interested in the history of opium use chiefly because of its effects on the emotions and the imagination will find little here to enlarge their knowledge; a few references to the euphoric enjoyed by Fenland addicts, one rather descriptive chapter on "Opiate Use in Literary and Middle-Class Society", mention of the debate whether opium had stimulant as well as sedative effects, and some instances of late nineteenth-century users of cannabis and cocaine, and their enjoyments. The dissipation of misleading myths

about the effects of opium is part of the authors' purpose; for instance, the exotic opium-dens depicted by Dickens and other novelists are downgraded into harmless clubs for Chinese immigrants. Here, too, capitalist hypocrisy is seen rearing its ugly head; "the myth of the opium den was in the wider sense a domestic result of imperialism and the reaction to economic uncertainty"; it was "cultural insensitivity" that made a sinister myth out of "what was in reality only the customary relaxation of Chinese seamen".

The exaggerated emphasis on class-war attitudes towards opium addiction does not invalidate Virginia Berridge's general theme that our present legislative control over opium use is derived from special nineteenth-century circumstances, and may not hold good in all times and places. A changing climate of opinion is now beginning to make us

see narcotic drugs as a "recreational substance" on a par with alcohol and tobacco, all three substances requiring some control because they are dangerous to health if used in excess but not so different in kind from each other as to require totally different attitudes and restrictions. Of the evidence of opium use in England before the middle of the nineteenth century and of the subsequent introduction of medical and legislative control, Virginia Berridge concludes against too much restriction. "With opium, a society left to find its natural balances comes to a great harm" and our present system of drug control "has become too frightened and too mechanistic". This thoughtful work — sometimes obscured by clumsy phrasing or sociological jargon, but for the most part clearly and cogently expressed — an important question has been asked, even if a conclusive answer has not been provided.



Middle-class women morphine addicts, "selfishly fond of pleasure", an illustration from *Le Petit Journal*, reproduced in the book reviewed here.

A moonlit home

By George Mikes

JANOS KENEDI

Do It Yourself

128pp. Pluto Press. £2.95.
0 85104 344 8

Anyone worried by moonlighting, tax evasion, bribery and other shady practices prevalent in this country should read Janos Kenedi's book — subtitled *Hungary's Hidden Economy* — where he will find out that we are bungling amateurs and groping beginners compared with the Hungarians.

Kenedi started off as a law-abiding citizen, strongly opposed to all wheeler-dealing methods and finding "fixing" and profiteering morally repellant. When his mother asked him to sell her flat, he conducted the sale with scrupulous honesty, refusing a large sum offered to him under the counter, only to find out that someone else had pocketed the money. The transaction had after all been dishonest, he reflected, but the money had gone to someone else. The moral was clear to Kenedi. He decided to build a house and, by the evidence of this book, proved himself an able, indeed brilliant, student. He says that he learnt more in five months of wheeler-dealing than in five years at university.

The cost of the site was 700,000 forints (roughly £7,000) but, for the purposes of stamp duty, had to appear less. An official valuer came along, Kenedi handed him an envelope, the valuer practised hand assessed its thickness, and after an inspection lasting less than three minutes, the official fixed the value of the land at 350,000 forints. Then the first blow fell: planning permission was refused by an honest and incorruptible borough architect. This difficulty was easily overcome by the simple device of pencilling a wall on to the plan which — as the less up-

right borough architects knew — would never be built. But it looked all right on the files. After this Kenedi managed to persuade the building society to advance him a large proportion of the full value of the house in cash, and spent part of it on a jeep.

Now the actual building could begin. Kenedi dealt with two groups of people. The first were the moonlighters, who did the building work as a second job, and were cheaper than workers employed by the state-owned enterprises. (Sometimes in fact, managers of state-owned firms were members of moonlighting teams and on occasion even worked under their own subordinates.) But the second group was much more important. These were public employees who could steal building materials from the state. To work

with this second group was cheaper still.

Kenedi got into his stride in no time. Like everybody else, he looked to the black market for his supplies, and disregarded the possibilities of obtaining them in a straightforward way. Which was a pity. He found out, when it was too late, that he could have bought a lorry-load of sand, and had it delivered for 750 forints instead of paying double the amount on the black market, with delivery extra.

This, however, was exceptional. You cannot rely in Hungary, Kenedi says, on normal commercial methods. Transport was a major problem but quickly solved. Most lorry-drivers earn extra money on "black" deliveries. Their wages are officially fixed at a maximum of 4,000 forints a month (less than £10 a week) but they are determined to earn 10,000 a month (£23 a week). Most employers regard this as a fair claim but the law is the law. So they put their eyes to these extra journeys and are not too strict about the allocation of petrol. Officially booked deliveries are erratic and expensive, "black" deliveries reliable and cheap.

Indeed, Kenedi was greatly impressed by the honesty and dependability of all these swindlers. They established their own rules and code of conduct and adhered to them more scrupulously than the state-owned firms to official contracts. To survive in the underworld of cheats you must be impeccably honest. Officials and high-ups are fully aware of what is going on. They also realize that the derisively low wages have to be supplemented and therefore as long as the cheating is kept within reasonable bounds it is tolerated. In any case a crackdown on the whole system would create nationwide economic chaos.

The building of Kenedi's house proceeded fast. He needed Hungarian-sell blocks (whatever they may be) which cost 1,100 forints new and 150

second-hand. For a small consideration a number of new blocks were sold to him as faulty — at an 86 per cent discount. When he went to buy radiators, he was asked whether he was from a public body, and on his reassuring the suppliers that he was a private customer, he was offered all the radiators he wanted. His purchase of a three-piece suite is another instructive tale. He fell in love with the suite and bought it on the spur of the moment for 20,000 forints. The supervisor of the store, in exchange for the usual small envelope, gave him some useful advice. Once he had the furniture at home he discovered some real or imaginary faults in it and took it back to the store, where the supervisor refunded his money without question. The suite was sent back to the return centre for faulty furniture and, thanks to a nod from the supervisor, Kenedi was able to re-purchase it at a quarter of the original price. And so on: today Kenedi is installed in his magnificent new house, built at a bargain price.

He maintains that the whole system is proper and fully justified. All it amounts to, he claims, is "selective distribution". Societies deal with shortages in different ways. Capitalists ration by the purse, which is unfair. Early socialists used to ration by patience, i.e. by queues, which is primitive. Queuing has been abolished in modern Hungary; Hungarians have "circular entitlement", that is, goods come in through the front door and leave through the back. Besides, the author adds, in a socialist state everything belongs to the citizens so it is no crime to rob the state; it is simply transferring money from one pocket to another.

This revealing and amusing little book was not published in ordinary editions in Hungary ("too negative" said the censors) but enjoyed a wide circulation in *samizdat* form. The English edition fails to give the name of the translator but, in fact, the very readable English version is by Julian Schoepflin.

The building of Kenedi's house proceeded fast. He needed Hungarian-sell blocks (whatever they may be) which cost 1,100 forints new and 150

Hanging around the house

By Jennifer Uglow

MARILYN RUESCHEMEYER

Professional Work and Marriage
An East-West Comparison
197pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 30080 7

While much has been written about the sociology of work, and of the family, rather less attention has been devoted to the links between the two worlds, and it is on the changing position and expectations of women, the barriers to their fulfilment at home and at work, and the support provided by institutional structures in the East and by the Women's Movement in the West, that Marilyn Rueschemeyer has centred this study — the latest in a series published by Macmillan in conjunction with St Antony's College, Oxford.

Professional Work and Marriage is a vivid excursion into the "concrete experience" of individual professionals; their wives and husbands in America and Eastern Europe. Marilyn Rueschemeyer has chosen to base her work not on a large-scale survey, testing pre-formed hypotheses, but on seventy lengthy, directed interviews in which she explores the feelings and attitudes of her subjects towards the ways in which personal life in marriage and the family are "affected by pressures of a father and breadwinner, the wife and homemaker, the child and the widow and childless, the grief over the early death of a child could be softened by the knowledge that a financial burden had been removed as well as by the consolation of religion. In this as in much else *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* provides us with a new awareness of historical reality as perceived by the common people.

raises problems. This is particularly true of those interviewed from Soviet Russia, chiefly émigré Jews, where the lengthy digression needed to account for specific cultural factors and for what is naively termed "possible bias" casts doubt on the wisdom of using such experience as even a partial basis for a chapter entitled "Does Socialism make a difference?"

The interviews revealed fiercer ambition and obsession with work in men from single-career families, with correspondingly greater isolation and depression on the part of their wives. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, the author detects a markedly ambivalent attitude to the husband's career. On the one hand, the wife "resents the time and attention he gives to his work; on the other hand, she has ambitions for his career development which may or may not be realistic and which may prohibit him from having what she would consider an adequate involvement in the family and the marriage". And while she resents being confined to the home she equally dislikes other people suggesting that her domestic activities are not important.

In dual-career families, since wives are not relegated to a separate sphere, there is more mutual respect and they "are less overwhelmed by their husbands' successes and failures, and have less of a feeling of being controlled by forces they can neither understand nor affect". Yet the very success and individual fulfilment which saves them from the trap of the single-career family, can also result in husband and wife, leading separate, parallel lives rather than enjoying collective, shared experiences.

Turning to Eastern Europe, the author seeks to contrast the effects of Western individualism with those related to the more collective basis

of work in a socialist economy, which (in a time of labour shortage) accepts women's place in the labour force without question. The introductory chapter provides impressive numerical comparisons: in the USSR women comprise 36 per cent of lawyers, 75 per cent of physicians and 83 per cent of dentists, as opposed to 3.8, 16 and 6.9 per cent respectively in the United Kingdom. These statistics are later set against the actual experience and the role conceptions of married couples. Their blunt statements — "In order to feel good, work is important. It is bad to remain at home" — suggest that while expectations may be different in Eastern Europe an egalitarian Utopia is not exactly at hand — "I don't even notice that the dust is around until it gets really bad, but she wants it clean. Those are male-female differences". The conclusion is that such pressures as those produced by collective production deadlines or cramped living conditions, the balance those created by individual responsibility or about anxiety status in the West, and that dual-career families in both societies are burdened by traditional role expectations, especially with regard to child care.

Occasionally *Professional Work and Marriage* reads like a tract in a "Save the Family" crusade, as the author attempts to resolve the conflict between her belief in the importance of female autonomy with an equal attachment to long-lasting, stable marriages as a valuable element in society. She draws our attention to East Germany where institutional and ideological supports may help sustain, even though they cannot create, a combination of independence and freely chosen commitment.

Sociologists estimate that 10 per cent of the women studying at the university decide to have children without marrying. If the woman chooses to divorce or not to marry, she is not isolated. She has her work, she has her colleagues, group. She has access to *Cribber* for her child; she has the right to an apartment.

Once the stability of marriage is not related to economic dependence its continuation becomes slightly more a matter of free choice. Ms Rueschemeyer is obviously heartened by the "great commitment" she encountered in Eastern Europe. "To retaining the family and participation in a common, shared life".

Whatever one may feel about the virtue of marriage as an institution, this personal note, backed as it is by telling documentation, makes an individual contribution to the debate. At times, the sense of an authorial presence led me to read the book less for its academic than for its autobiographical interest; interviewing friends worked well because of the "possibility of hanging around the house" a bit more; the larger perspective I had on the family... the honesty and effort I expected the women to make... Yet does her circle of friends really include the paranoid academic? (People drop you because you're not going anywhere in the department?), or the appalling doctor who transferred from private to general practice because he disliked being treated like a tradesman, whereas the poor "appreciates me; they're respectful while I'm away in the summer, the loyal ones wait, even at some risk to themselves. My patients worship me?"

After exposure to such egomania one can understand her concern to promote "humane, intense, open relations" but one also tends to agree that, with regard to professional work and marriage, "peeling with this tension, intellectually and politically, remains an unfinished task."

"I have long regarded Muller as the best American biologist of this century and so read this quite superb biography with total fascination." — James Watson, winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology

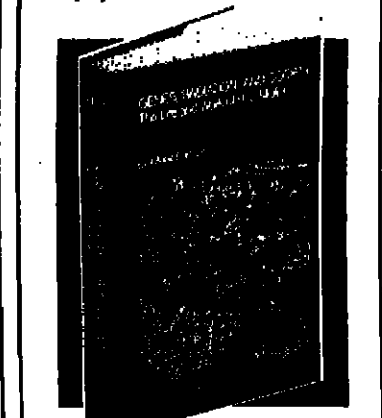
"Should take its place high among the great biographies of master scientists... Here is a book that is not only a pleasure to read for its style and its accurate, scholarly treatment of a very complex person, but is also a definitive biography of a leader in the biological revolution of modern man." — *The Quarterly Review of Biology*

H.J. Muller (1896-1987)
GENES, RADIATION, AND SOCIETY
The Life and Work of H.J. Muller

By ELOP AXEL CARLSON
With 20 black and white photographs, 20 drawings.
CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS
215 House, 37 Oyster Street
London W1X 4HQ
or
H.J. Muller, 100, New York 10001

CORNELL
University Press

H.J. Muller is perhaps best known as the Nobel Prize-winning American geneticist who first showed that exposure to radiation would produce mutations in living organisms. He was a man who was admired and honored as well as disliked and mistrusted for his passionate and always controversial involvement with the major issues of his time. Genes, Radiation, and Society is the first biography of this remarkable man.



"Unlike some scientists who pursue tranquil lives, Muller was energetic, combative and controversial... This biography provides a stirring account of his life, and one that asks the reader to enter the scientist's rigorous world for a short course in genetics; it makes for absorbing reading." — *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"Carlson provides an intimate portrait of Muller's life and work. He has drawn fully on the published writings, a few key interviews, and, most important, the extensive Muller archive of correspondence and manuscripts... This biography is an important book as well as an absorbing narrative of the life of the father of radiation genetics... A lucid, at times eloquent, rendering of Muller's remarkable life and of the scientific field he did so much to create." — *Science*

Capitalism and its prospects

By T. W. Hutchison

ARNOLD HEERTJE (Editor): Schumpeter's Vision: Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy after 40 years. 208pp. Eastbourne: Praeger-Holt-Saunders. £5.95. 0 03 060276 9

Joseph Schumpeter and Keynes were the two major economists of their generation. Both were born in 1883 and died shortly after the Second World War. Undoubtedly, with the "Revolution" named after him, Keynes quite overshadowed Schumpeter in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Now, in the 1980s, for an allegedly almost chronically crisis-ridden subject, perhaps Schumpeter's work, and his style as an economist, have more to offer.

This work falls into three main parts. First, there are his great books on the history and method of economics. Second, there is his work on economic development and cyclical fluctuations, including his much-neglected, largely historical study of *Business Cycles* (1939); and thirdly, there are his writings on Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. Beginning with important articles of 1920-24, culminating in his famous book of that title of 1942, and supplemented by further essays in the last years of his life. Though Schumpeter himself referred to his *CSD* as a "parergon", it has been described by a Harvard colleague, Arthur Smithies, as "in some respects . . . his greatest work."

The Dutch private bank, Insinger, Willem & Cie, to celebrate its bicentenary, has sponsored, as a tribute to the world of economics, this volume of essays, in which evaluations are attempted of Schumpeter's ideas and prognoses in his *CSD*, forty years after the book's appearance, and on the eve of Schumpeter's own centenary. Introduced by J. Zijlstra, President of the Nederlandse Bank, the nine distinguished essayists, are, in order of appearance, Samuelson, Bottomore, Feller, Haberler, Heilbroner, Lampert, Smithies, Wiles and Lamsenhaus. As Dr Zijlstra claims, this is "an excellent collection of essays about a unique book by an exceptional man." The appetite is whetted rather than fully satisfied, but the volume should render a stimulating service, at this juncture, to "the world of economics".

In his book of 1942, Schumpeter summed up his argument with brisk, monosyllabic answers to vast, problematically-worded questions, such as, notably, "Can Capitalism Survive? No, it cannot," and "Can Socialism work? Of course it can." All the terms in these two questions, obviously, are dripping

with ambiguity. Nevertheless, it is expressed in two or three pieces of 1918-24, in particular in the article "Sozialistische Möglichkeiten von Heute" of 1920. Professor Bottomore, therefore, rather misses the mark in suggesting that, in his emphasis on the role of intellectuals, "Schumpeter was undoubtedly too greatly influenced by the particular circumstances of the 1930s." Whether or not Schumpeter exaggerated the role of intellectuals, he was hardly influenced by the circumstances of the 1930s, either on this point or on any other. In fact, his fiercest denunciation of the *Intellectuals* came in his article of 1920. Moreover, with regard to the great depression of the Thirties, he denied that it signified any break in trend and claimed that its extreme severity was due to unfortunate coincidences. He also completely rejected Keynesian predictions in the 1930s regarding the exhaustion of investment opportunities.

A single-sentence summary of Schumpeter's main thesis in his writings on *CSD* (quoted by Samuelson) appeared in his *Economic Journal* article of 1928: Capitalism . . . creates by rationalizing the human mind a mentality and style of life incompatible with its own fundamental conditions, motives and social institutions, and will be changed, although not by economic necessity and probably even at some sacrifice of economic welfare, into an order of things which it will be merely a matter of taste and terminology to call Socialism or not.

Schumpeter discerned some three or four main processes undermining "capitalism" and bringing about its supersession. First, there was the trend to larger and larger scale, originally noticed by Engels, which was supposed to lead eventually to socialization. Secondly, there was a trend to rationalization, "routinization", and bureaucratic management, with an alleged reduction of uncertainty, and an erosion of the innovative, or entrepreneurial function on which "capitalism" essentially depended. Thirdly, there was the decay of vital features of capitalism's social and institutional framework, with the loosening of family ties, inheritance, and the undermining of the concept of property, leading to shorter-term views and a weakening of the drive to accumulate. Next, Schumpeter argued, there was the destructive role of the intellectuals, who were created by, and given full rein under "capitalism". Finally, as Smithies summarizes the point: "Capitalistic success has raised the absolute economic position of all classes, particularly labour, agriculture, the aged and the unemployed. This improvement in absolute standards has strengthened the relative political power of those classes vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie, on whom capitalistic success depends."

Schumpeter's theory and forecasts about *CSD* were based on a considerably longer perspective than seems to be recognized in this volume. Samuelson, for example, conjectures correctly that "the 1928 formulation cannot be ruled out". But, in fact, all the main arguments in Schumpeter's theory were

certain degree of over-pessimism regarding the prospects for "capitalism", seems to be Schumpeter's over-optimism regarding the workability of "socialism". Haberler, his one-time colleague - unequalled in the closeness and accuracy of his knowledge of Schumpeter and his work, and who, with Professor Feller, offers what is, on the whole, a more favourable assessment than the other contributors here - agrees that Schumpeter "underestimated the inefficiency and economic weakness of the centrally-planned economies". He began attaching too much importance to the vacuous, Utopian abstractions of Barone, Lange and Lerner, as providing the answer to the rather dogmatic and ambiguous assertion of Mises regarding the "impossibility" of socialism.

On the other hand, when Wiles registers as his "main complaint" that Schumpeter failed "to spot the military messianism of Russian Marxism-Leninism", he is surely going too far. In the chapter added to the second edition of *CSD* Schumpeter denounced, in the strongest terms, what he regarded as the appalling surrender by the western Allies to Stalin in 1945, and predicted, when the US still possessed a nuclear monopoly, that "Russia will be left undisturbed . . . to construct by far the greatest war machine, absolutely and relatively, the world has ever seen" (as the fruits of socialist planning). Moreover, when Wiles further charges Schumpeter with being "really quite incurious about socialism", it must be remembered that there was virtually only one allegedly "socialist" country, which, in his lifetime, he could have been curious about; and that, in fact, from 1918 onwards, he had repeatedly dismissed the Russian "experiment" as never having been a genuine socialist revolution, at any rate in the Marxian sense - any more than had been the Bela Kun coup in Hungary.

Certainly Schumpeter was open to the counter-criticism of confusion regarding his concept of "socialism", in that, after having defined it in terms of a centrally planned economy, he was reluctant to recognize the Russian revolution as genuinely "socialist". Moreover, he might further be charged with having interpreted Marx too favourably on a fundamental point. For, from 1918 onwards, Schumpeter repeatedly insisted that it was a central Marxist revolution must be "essentially a revolution in the fullness of time", when "capitalism has done its work", in an economically and politically "mature" society. Questionable though this kind of Fabian interpretation of Marx may be, an emphatic rejection is quite in order of Heilbroner's scathing comments on the outmoded quality of Schumpeter's "Marxian scholarship" (with regard to the labour theory of value), "which would not be given serious consideration among Marxian scholars today" - such as the lunatic of "the New Left". For this reviewer Heilbroner's contrast is that of the alleged "passé" character of Schumpeter's critique of Marx.

However, there are certainly parts of Schumpeter's diagnosis and prognoses regarding "capitalism" and "socialism" which now look highly questionable. He was excessively impressed by "bigness", which, admittedly, as Haberler observes, renders capitalism vulnerable to socialist critics. But Schumpeter exaggerated the extent to which, with the trend to bigness, and to rationalization and "routinization", uncertainty, and the essential function of the capitalist entrepreneur, would be reduced. As the editor observes: "There has been more room for dynamic entrepreneurial activity than Schumpeter foresaw. . . . Again, as Samuelson, Bottomore and Wiles recognize, he arrived at his pessimistic prediction by means of too narrow a conception, or definition, of 'capitalism', confining it to a social framework centred on the family and inherited property, or to 'paternalistic' capitalism, as Wiles calls it. Schumpeter did not allow for the succeeding stage of managerial 'capitalism'."

Much more serious today than in 1918-24, in particular in the article "Sozialistische Möglichkeiten von Heute" of 1920. Professor Bottomore, therefore, rather misses the mark in suggesting that, in his emphasis on the role of intellectuals, "Schumpeter was undoubtedly too greatly influenced by the particular circumstances of the 1930s." Whether or not Schumpeter exaggerated the role of intellectuals, he was hardly influenced by the circumstances of the 1930s, either on this point or on any other. In fact, his fiercest denunciation of the *Intellectuals* came in his article of 1920. Moreover, with regard to the great depression of the Thirties, he denied that it signified any break in trend and claimed that its extreme severity was due to unfortunate coincidences. He also completely rejected Keynesian predictions in the 1930s regarding the exhaustion of investment opportunities.

FICTION

Half love, half joke

By Alan Bold

MILAN KUNDERA: The Book of Laughter and Forgetting. 228pp. Faber. £7.95. 0 571 11830 5

That the individual in the twentieth century is subject to guilt-edged insecurity is an assumption which distinguishes the self-consciously "artistic" novel from the popular piece of fiction. It would seem that an exploration of this emotionally supercharged area depends on some knowledge of Continental habits, since, at crucial moments, foreign words like *ennui* and *angst* replace English expressions. The modern novelist in search of new terms to express the problem of existential identity can relax in the knowledge that the Czechs have a word for it. "Litosť", Milan Kundera explains, "designates a feeling as infinite as an open accordion, a feeling that is the synthesis of many others: grief, sympathy, remorse, and an indefinable longing. The first syllable, which is long and stressed, sounds like the wail of an abandoned dog. . . . Litosť is a state of torment caused by a sudden insight into one's own miserable self."

Kundera includes this information in "Litosť", the fifth section of his seven-part sequence (which has been fluently translated from the Czech by Michael Henry Heim). Although the book unfolds in fragments, Kundera insists it is a novel - "This entire book is a novel in the form of variations", he declares. It is a novel in the sense of being an elaborate story, but the complexity has everything to do with cognition and very little to do with character. Stretches of narrative are counterpointed against seemingly autonomous anecdotes and matter-of-fact statements. An erotic scene is liable to dissolve into a discussion of the behaviour of blackbirds.

Kundera is interested in establishing contrasts in order to confront the reader with a choice because, like the student here "Litosť", he sees "the world as divided into two: half love, half joke." Kundera's sense

of humour is sometimes surrealistic, sometimes deadly serious. In "Litosť" the student has to choose between an evening with the woman he desires and a meeting with the great poet he adores. The woman is Kristyna, a butcher's wife in her thirties; the poet is Goethe, who is dining at the Prague Writers' Club with Lermontov, Voltaire, Petrarch, Verlaine, Boccaccio, Yessenin "and several others not particularly worth mentioning". Encouraged by Kristyna, the student goes to meet Goethe who eventually sends him back to the woman, and to sexual frustration. The student therefore achieves little, though he emerges wiser for the experience.

Laughter, Kundera suggests, is both subversive and irresponsible. Accordingly, he binds the book together with the key image of the border and decorates it with the leit-motif of vulnerability. Given the existence of limits, of the border, the individual has to choose to respect it or go beyond it. In fact Kundera remembers his own decision to go beyond the border. In 1969, when the Russians brought Husak to power, the Czech people experienced "a massacre of culture and thought". Kundera lost his professional post and became a banned author. "I had a few years", Kundera recalls, "and then got into my car and drove as far west as I could, to the Breton town of Rennes, where the very first day I found an apartment on the top floor of the tallest high-rise. When the sun woke me the next morning, I realized that its large picture windows faced east, toward Prague."

In other words Kundera's own decision indirectly involved the political destiny of his country. Having escaped he had to live with his *Litosť* intact; what he left behind was a bundle of memories he has attempted to gather together in this book. In the fiction Kundera's autobiographical asides - assaults would be a better word - are used to disturb the flow of the narrative. He uses alienation-effects to unsettle the reader, and to emphasize that the novel (or at least this novel in particular) has a didactic function which transcends the obligations of storytelling. Kundera is anxious about what he has left behind, about what aspect of

him remains in Prague. For he is painfully aware of the impermanence of emotion, even if recorded mechanically. The book opens with an image of loss through erasure. In 1948 Klement Gottwald was photographed in Prague's Old Town Square alongside various colleagues, including Clementis. When, subsequently, Clementis was hanged for treason he had to be eliminated from history to prevent Gottwald being contaminated by his photographic proximity. It was a simple matter: "The propaganda section immediately brushed him out of history." Towards the end of the book, Kundera has another reference to the unreliability of the camera when a character is conditioned to regard his lover in these terms: "The motions of her body seemed to set a large reel of film rolling, and her face was the television screen the film was projected onto."

Kundera's own vision is, despite the clever technical apparatus displayed in his novel, anything but mechanical. As he watches his characters he is reminded that for "eight years my country has been crouching in the sweet, strong embrace of the Russian empire" and longs to be closer to his creations; fortunately "the tear in my eye manifests like the lens of a telescope and brings their faces closer". By such intrusions the author makes his ideological intentions clear. He is convinced that the individual is too vulnerable to hold out alone against totalitarian institutions. If one takes flight then one deprives those left behind of the support necessary for survival.

In the final section of the book, "The Border", Jan is "overwhelmed by the vague and mysterious idea of the border". He is about to leave for America, and takes his girlfriend to a nudist beach. He suddenly succumbs to the thought that "the Jews had fled into Hitler's gas chambers naked and en masse". He is shocked into a tentative conclusion: "Perhaps . . . the Jews had also been on the other side of the border and . . . nudity is the uniform of the other side." Such thoughts punctuate the movement of this provocative, unsettling and wholly admirable book.

Roth's view of life is understandably dark. Not unlike Kafka, he describes a man trying to assert himself, working for a moderate happiness, but his life is entirely dictated to him by some hostile force. *Weights and Measures* is written with the most economy, yet without simplification. The joyful, the ironic, the irrational, the malicious, all find a place in this narrative: "Three days later his wife was confined. In the kitchen. It was an easy birth. No sooner had the midwife been called than he arrived, the son of Josef Novak. Inspector Eibenschütz reflected that only bastards come into the world so quickly and easily." The book abounds in memorable scenes: the virulent green of Regina's knitting, the small pleasures of a community of cheats, the homesick ballads that the Russian deserters sing as soon as they have crossed the border. David Le Vay has translated this spare and eloquent writer faithfully and well. On a couple of occasions, he follows him into recognizable Germanisms ("abandoned by God and the world" and "strike everything out"), but there are only indications of his closeness to the original.

But Eibenschütz fights back, and it is this that seals his fate. Discovering his wife's infidelity - she is by now pregnant - he makes her sleep in the kitchen, and he secures Novak's transfer to another district. His activities as Inspector continue with renewed vigour. In the border tavern, he comes into contact with the hard-core criminal element: the murderer Jadowitz, and Kapturak, who (after his Russian and Austrian desertions) is this time a first-class Jew. Eibenschütz is clearly unhappy, and unable to adapt to any of the new conditions of his existence: de-

Ire in the soul

By Patricia Craig

ROY BRADFORD: The Last Ditch. 263pp. Blackstaff Press. £3.95 (paperback). 0 85640 239 1

It was William of Orange who offered to die in the last ditch rather than witness his country's humiliation: a fine gesture exemplifying the spirit of intransigence revered by Northern Irish adherents to the loyalist cause. That particular trait of defiance was addressed to the English is a matter of no significance at all for those without the will to relish historical ironies. These are plentiful enough in Ulster's history, but are often rejected out of hand. Roy Bradford, in this novel, records the slaying, by an outraged Protestant, of a contemporary painting which associated Pope Alexander VIII with William's celebrated victory at the Boyne, an historically truthful representation, but one which is all the same shocking in terms of the Protestant myth.

A politician's novel about politics is, at the very least, likely to prove informative about the processes of government, and the stratagems which continuous self-promotion entails. "Every cabinet discussion was a thinly disguised battle for supremacy," and Roy Bradford, an ex-Minister in the Stormont Government, provides an authoritative account of the uncertainties, intrigues and realignments of political life. He makes Ministers' speeches sound authentic enough. But direct transcription does not always make for satisfactory fiction. Politicians' jargon - dilemmas, tight-rope, losing all credibility, deteriorating situations, lunatic fringes, and so on - is all very well; but these phrases come as naturally to the author of *The Last Ditch* as they do to his characters. You look in vain for a trace of the ironic detachment that can make such expressions memorable and entertaining. A political theme, too, quite often gnaws in effectiveness from satirical, quizzical or allegorical treatment. But Roy Bradford has chosen to keep to a strictly documentary narrative - apart from a sensational and somewhat distasteful opening chapter, and some rather novelesque love scenes. He has altered the characters of the leading players, naturally enough, and tampered with the sequence of events (cutting out the whole business of the power-sharing Executive, for example); but basically *The Last Ditch* recreates the troublesome period just before the Loyalist Strike of 1974.

Bradford's central character, Desmond Carson, Minister of Home Affairs, has put across his copious gift of tongue with a Catholic civil servant, called Josephine Scanlon (who owes her place at Stormont Castle to a belated, half-hearted reformist impulse within the Unionist hierarchy). What these two feel for one another, or so the author would have us believe, is bigger than both of them - bigger too than the ancestral burden of puritan scruples which often besets the wily adulterer in Northern Ireland. Catholic or Protestant, it makes no difference. Carson, momentarily perturbed by "the old guilty complex, the old sense of sin", wonders "Could he hope to have luck? Perhaps it's not by accident that Joe Scanlon, suffering a similar misgiving at the same time, uses the same words to express it: 'How could she hope to have luck?'"

Without the prospect of good fortune, then, the egregious twosome makes the most of present delights: gazing and coupling (sometimes the two activities seem to be taking place simultaneously). Joe's thoughts, fortunately not presented in detail, are surrounded by a terrible sense of false drama - the "easiest option, perhaps, for an author who cannot do better than make his characters illuminating or even consistent. Joe, we're told, was educated at an English convent and then at Sussex University, yet it was at school that he learned the art of the politician."

The crux of the novel is a constitutional crisis. Westminster has decreed that the cherished B-Special police force should be disbanded; Carson, Stormont, to avert an outcry, twist the edict to make it appear that the Specials are being upgraded instead. Rumour, high feelings and apprehensions are against them. The rinters, the die-hards, Unionist agitators, fundamentalist Christians, unthinking Orangemen, all those for whom "even the mildest reform was a betrayal of the Protestant cause" quickly make plans to bring the province to a standstill - striking while the loyalist ire is hot.

A moment of levity, calls "the hated Saxon oppressor". At school in Anco? This girl, the only notable female character in the book, is also the only Catholic with anything like a substantial speaking part. Two members of what I take to be the SDLP do make an appearance, it's true, but their only purpose seems to be to butter up Her Majesty's Representative in Northern Ireland, a person of facile liberal views which predispose him to sympathize with the disaffected. His name is either Oliver or Nigel Birch; it is not clear which.

Seamus Heaney's "civilized outrage" and the reservations underlying it. Find a cruder counterpart in one of Desmond Carson's observations: "the whole battery of pious condemnation was brought into public play when the private armies brought off some deadly exploit, but secretly there was barely concealed satisfaction that 'our boys' could give those Republican bastards as good as they got." Inbred resentments and intractable convictions persist on both sides, often against all reason: it's to Bradford's credit that he has identified some of these. It is almost beyond belief - but still believable - that Carson should think of Joe Scanlon as "an exotic creature", "from a different tribe", merely because she's a Northern Irish Catholic. Of course, she is female as well, and this defines her role quite clearly in Carson's view (and, I am afraid, the author's): "There was nothing like a woman to unbend the mind."

Strict fairness may slight a distaste for the more overt forms of tribal bigotry bring Carson as close as he gets to a liberal standpoint, and these, the author implies, are recently acquired characteristics. At heart he remains an extremist, an opportunist, a tough administrator. Bradford is certainly at his best - at his most assured and fluent, that is - when he deals with Cabinet meetings, with UDF truculence and with the bustle and harassment of government offices, all of which lend themselves to a downright, pedestrian style. Occasionally, however, some startling figures of speech creep in. Bradford's unconvincing "The grass roots would murder him", as well as mixed metaphors ("He saw himself as the catalyst bringing the most disparate elements together in search of the elusive common ground"; "He'd take the bull by the horns . . . Let them know he wasn't a sitting duck"); that nearly rival Sir Boyle Roche's (mis)imagined rat ("I smell a rat. I see it floating in the air before me. But mark me, Sir, I will nip it in the bud") - a classic of oratorical infelicity.

There are many opulent interiors, and - for contrast - one or two car journeys through the rainy, desaturated city, but Bradford shows little susceptibility to atmosphere; action in the political sphere is what engages his interest. *The Last Ditch* is properly cynical about the tactics involved in the pursuit of power, and knowledgeable about the "many illiberalism can take in Ulster. In matters of style, and historical insight, though, it has less to offer (considering the richness of the material it deals with) than you might expect.

The Sinclair Prize for Fiction, worth £5,000, and possible publication by Sinclair, Browne, is offered to the novelist writing on social or political themes. Manuscripts should be submitted to The National Book League, 45 East Hill, London SW3 2JF. The closing date is 31st March 1982.

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The stir in the words

By Pat Rogers

DENIS DONOGHUE:
Feroocious Alphabets
211pp. Faber, £8.95.
0 571 11809 7

Feroocious Alphabets is both a searching and an entertaining book, but it only seems to have been given a name as an afterthought. Denis Donoghue has always had something of a weakness for fancy titles; the present one comes (again!) from Wallace Stevens, and its obliquity serves to emphasize, rather than conceal, the diversity of the book's aims. On one level this is a polemical essay, which might have been called "Beyond Communication". But at the same time it is a review of contemporary literary theorists, a survey of "ideological strife among modern critics". The work offers its own taxonomy of reading, with a division between "epireaders" and "graphireaders". At times it aspires to the state of a collection of maxims or *perennes* (Lichtenberg is quoted, Kenneth Burke in his more oracular vein imitated). There are actual broadcast talks, reproduced, and meditations on the nature of talk. All worthwhile topics, handled in a consistently positive and humane way. All to do with language. But alphabets, no, not even in the extended sense you might apply to George Steiner's *After Babel*: and as for "ferocious", that is the purest transferred epithet. The only ferocity in evidence is the zeal of the critics — the omnivorousness of Harold Bloom, the *l'usq'au-boutisme* of Jacques Derrida; or rather, of their theories. Language itself seems scarcely able to fight back.

The separate functions overlap, but it is possible to approach the book initially in three constituent parts. The first section reprints Donoghue's six talks, given a year or two ago, for the BBC series on "Words". There follows a commentary on the foregoing, filling out and explaining, retracting a little here and there. This leads to a chapter entitled "Communication, Communication, Conversation", where the heart of the polemical essay is to be found. The second part is transitional between these earlier reflections and the taxonomy to come. It considers the work of various critics, mostly of a generation back, under the rubric of "style as compensation" — compensation, that is, for the lack of contact inherent in written (as opposed to spoken) discourse. Then comes the third and longest section, in which Donoghue assigns both poets (or poets-as-theorists, Hopkins and Mallarmé) and critics to one of two camps: those engaged in "epireading" and "graphireading". For the moment, we might describe the difference along these lines — the former "is predicated upon the desire to hear", so that epireading becomes the quest for a voice, or presence, whereas the latter is basically visual, and rejects sentimental, humanizing or contextual notions of language. Georges Poulet and Burke belong to the first class — so does Bloom, but only with a little strain. Barthes and Paul de Man join Derrida in the second group.

The obvious way to make progress would seem to be to follow through each part successively, but I'm not sure this will work. The sections do interrelate, but they don't precisely build one upon another, and the gestures towards a linear argument are never very convincing. There is no end but addition. What happens in the first part, for instance, is that Donoghue gives us the broadcast talks, tells us why he found them hard to put over, and expands their implications in ways that take the discussion into a wholly different frame of reference. The ensuing ideas represent not so much what Donoghue would have said on his topics, given a different medium; but an analysis of the conditions of speaking in oral delivery (as in a broadcast, or, I guess, a lecture), where there is no possibility of personal communication. As for the original broadcasts, they have a detached, almost like-thanks-of-Literary-B

hauled up for inspection: but Donoghue's procedures have ensured that they are no longer available for inclusion in a sustained argument.

None the less, they make absorbing material in their own right. Donoghue comments on the difficulty of establishing a tone within a four-minute talk. What he doesn't mention, though it is surely to the point, is the fact that the "Words" broadcasts form an interruption in a diet chiefly of non-verbal sound: for Radio 3 is for the most part a music channel. The loyalty of the audience has been established by Brahms or Buxtehude or Birtwistle: listeners may well use interval talks as an opportunity to perform minor domestic offices. Donoghue admits to "mixing" in framing his discussions, but they came over, to my recollection, without a sense of strain. The first two fall more neatly than the others into the usual "Words" category: one on a neologism in *Finnegans Wake* that Joyce didn't quite invent, one on the increasing tendency to affix singular verbs to plural subjects. Whimsical etymology and the transactions of the Society for Pure English often turn up in the series, but they don't really lie very close to Donoghue's deepest concerns. There is another talk on the linguistic habits of the main characters in *Spend, Spend, Spend*. Yet another considers what is implied for our culture in the widespread injection of abstract nouns, especially those connoting heroism. This is a thoughtful treatment, even if it gives the impression of stopping before it has properly started.

But the most challenging and (I think, deliberately) provocative piece concerns the English "one". This starts from a passage by Helen Gardner on "Burnt Norton". Donoghue quotes Dame Helen as saying "one finds oneself standing", and asserts that such Oxford locutions are impossible in Ireland. In his later commentary, he fills this out by observing that Irish has no passive voice "in the strict sense". He goes on:

Also in Irish you can't say, "I have been informed that..." If you say, "Deirtear", you mean that someone unnamed and unlocated people are saying something; it's like "rumor [sic] has it that..." If your information comes from spe-

cific people, you say "Deir siad," meaning "they — these people — tell me." "One", in Dame Helen's sentence, can't be translated directly into Irish.

All these expressions are contrasted with the lordly English "one", seen as a token of cultural imperialism, an in-group device for excluding the linguistically unwashed. As the author might have hoped, a native English user will rise to this bait. In the first place, the prejudice against "one" doesn't often extend to comparable usages in other languages — or in French, *man* in German or Swedish, and so on. (Maybe the supplementation of *men* in Dutch with pronouns like *je* and *u* points to a lack of ease mirrored in the English "you know" or "they say".) Again, the use of the third-person plural form *stad* in Irish is surely a mere grammatical fiction: in this usage, it's no more a real personal form than *one* is. Besides, the impersonal pronoun-less form in Irish is a special variant, not the stripped-down third person variously found in other languages (Italian, Portuguese, Russian). This surely casts doubt on Donoghue's claim that "the stance of saying 'one' is editorial; it eliminates the 'they' of other people and rival judgments." On this logic, *deirtear* equally evades the concrete *you* and *they*.

By this point, the polemical essay is beginning to surface. Donoghue values conversation above communication, because the exchange of feeling produces "a music of desire", a human need that goes beyond the transmission of accurate messages. So he enjoys in literature those effects which transcend the banalistic task of coding a meaning. Thus, "Nabokov's sentences rest to please, sweeter than anything provided by the office of communication." In *Ulysses*, "the signifiers don't even pretend to be in the service of a signified." Or this: "Literature is full of effects disproportionate to their causes, verbal ends masquerading as means." Quite so, though it serves to cover up for the absence of a felt listener, that we must (quoting Sonnet 23) learn "to hear with eyes", that "audible differences" are what mark off one writer from another.

(sometimes yes, sometimes no?). What is surely right and important in this discussion is the author's recognition that writing is a mode of utterance, and that words carve out a shape in our mind independent of their semantic effect.

This emphasis on voice has some affinities, but perhaps no more than that, with Barthes's late notion of "l'écriture à haute voix", defined thus in 1973: "Son objectif n'est pas la clarté des messages... (c'est) un texte où l'on puisse entendre le grain du gosier." Certainly when Barthes answers his own question "Qu'est-ce que la signification? C'est le sens en ce qu'il est produit sensuellement", this is close to Donoghue's belief in the "continuity between ordinary conversation and extraordinary literature... [which] encourages us to believe that much of our lives may be negotiated in common; received as sound." This in turn rests on the view that "language not only fulfills itself as speech but impersonates a speaker." Donoghue makes these points in the course of a final adjudication, where he allies himself with the epireaders against the graphireaders. So we cannot put off any longer some attempt to describe these categories.

I must register a faint protest at the outset. It is perhaps idle to complain that Donoghue has borrowed from Bloom, Gérard Genette, Foucault and others the habit of inventing opaque terms; at least he avoids mixed marriages of Latin and Greek. But one can legitimately complain about an argument such as the following, meant to justify the terminology:

In [this] tradition, alphabetic or phonetic writing is received as a transcript of speech: it is deemed to be preceded by the primary act within the terms of *logos*. The reader in this tradition uses the secondary instrument to return to the first sense... I call such reading epireading, following the Greek *epos*, which means speech or utterance... Epireading is not willing to leave written words as it finds them, on the page, the reader wants to restore the words to a source, a human situation involving speech, character, personality, and destiny construed as having a personal form.

For the moment I am not concerned with the adequacy of this view of "logocentrism" (nearly, if not quite, a mixed marriage). Rather I am disturbed by the capricious annexation of the prefix *epi*. As Donoghue knows perfectly well, for centuries this has gone duty in English to cover senses like "over, up to, as well as, near": there are now scores of well-established scientific applications. These derive from the ordinary preposition *epi*. To make the same combination of letters suggest *epos* is quite perverse. One might as well derive "hypercritical" from *hupo*, "under". Or one could state, "I call this *metalepsis*, because it carried it from Quatillan, and *metallion* means a mine." Should an unambiguous prefix connoting speech or utterance be required, then *lexi* is to hand. If we are to have these elaborate new terms, let them at least keep to some sort of linguistic probity.

Donoghue says he doesn't "see much point in haggling with colleagues over theories of literature". Yet that's what he is committed to, by the cast of his thinking and the emphases of his (declared) reading. He is splendidly alive to the possibilities disclosed in the stir of the words, as he puts it in a fine, rebellious essay here on R. P. Blackmur. But the stir in Shakespeare's words took place without the accompaniment of our current linguisticable, and it remains to be shown that current theory aids the interpretation of any but the canonized texts. (The only post-modernist writer mentioned here is John Ashbery, floating at the end.) So, all the taxonomies and terminologies serve as preludes and critical excursions to a masterwork of literary synthesis never achieved: the alphabets are clanked back and forth into the frameworks of theory, and real literature just goes discordantly on.

On the other side stand the graphireaders. This starts with the disappearance of the poet's voice in Mallarmé: it is carried on by Derrida, Barthes, de Man, and Lacoue Finas. Derrida isn't much easier to read about than to read, and some puzzling appositions don't help. ("Husserl determined the essence of language by taking the logical as its telos or norm" — well, which is it, read, and on the basis of her floating commentary on a Mallarmé sonnet, the loss doesn't seem to be all that disabling. The most approachable and lively section here is that on de Man. Donoghue has a number of fine *aperçus* concerning "the sensuousness of thought as speech" and allied matters. He uses as his avowed passage of de Man on Proust. One thing that comes over in the manner in which de Man actually translates Proust so as to aid his interpretation: the rendering of *la présence effective, ambivalente, immédiatement accessible* as "the actual, persistent, unmediated presence" subtly gives the epithet a nudge in the desired direction. De Man also translates Proust's description of the light stealing into Marcel's room and now "immobile dans un coin, comme un papillon posé" in the following words: "remaining motionless... in a corner, poised like a butterfly." Donoghue picks this up with talk of "a butterfly poised and fluttering in the corner of a room." But does the original mean more than "like a butterfly which was just alighted"?

In the brief epilogue, Donoghue characteristically moves off in fresh directions, instead of summing things up. There is one paragraph which is germane to his entire approach, and also makes room for wider reflections one might have on the current state of criticism:

Why not retain the opposition as rival forces within our minds? Isn't what we admire in literature, a tense relation, ideally a principled opposition between the constituent parts of the mind? In Yeats, we think of the quarrel of self and soul; in Eliot, of motives asphering to transcend time and motives determined to see time redeemed within its own dimensions; in Stevens, the quarrel between earth and sky, credences of summer and the abstract imperative, blazoned days and days not to be redeemed by blazonry.

The answer here is beautifully expressed in terms of characterizing the three poets. But surely it's the wrong answer, or an inadequate answer to the second question posed. An assessment of "what we admire in literature" for most educated readers would surely take in a wider field of vision: among those sighted might be (say) Horace, Dante, Rabelais, Milton, Voltaire, Goethe, Balzac. Donoghue might retort that he is in mind those writers who raise in a peculiarly acute form the problem as to which modern literary theory addresses itself. But that's just the trouble. Eloquent as the response is, it is yet again (for many of us) an answer to which there isn't a question.

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Some classical ephemera

By Edwin Morgan

Mayakovsky: Twenty Years of Work
Fruit Market Gallery, Edinburgh

In 1973, on the eightieth anniversary of Vladimir Mayakovsky's birth, the Writers Union in Moscow decided to reconstruct and remount the exhibition *Twenty Years of Work* which the poet himself had put together in 1930 shortly before his suicide. Since then, the exhibition has been shown in France, Germany, Italy, and Portugal, and it now comes to Britain, where it is to be seen at the Fruit Market Gallery in Edinburgh until February 24, and thereafter at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford (March 6 to April 30), at the Graves Art Gallery in Sheffield (May 8 to June 20), and at the Riverside Studios in London (June 26 to August 8). It is one of the most remarkable exhibitions anyone is likely to see this year.

"Why do you use the word 'I' in all your poems?" is one of the scores of questions collected from served in a book shown in the exhibition. Perhaps the answer to that question is that anyone with such a strong and distinctive personality as Mayakovsky, who became a legend in his own lifetime, could scarcely do anything else. One might add that he began his odd, staccato, semi-parodic autobiography, *I Myself*, with the sentences: "I am a poet. This is what makes me interesting." It was sufficiently unusual, nevertheless, for a poet to go to great pains to assemble, with the help of friends, such a large, rich collection of verbal and visual material devoted to showing the scope of his own work over two decades, and often indicating the public's reaction to it, whether favourable or unfavourable. It was a heroic self-defence, at a time when he was beginning to feel more and more isolated in the jungle of literary politics of the late 1920s. But as he rightly claimed, the exhibition was "not a jubilee, but an account rendered", and he arranged it in such a way as to encourage vigorous and continuing confrontation, as for instance where in one section the self-wounding heading "Mayakovsky is not intelligible to the masses" is attached to cuttings of his poems taken from popular newspapers with a circulation in towns all over Russia. The exhibition is a Soviet artist's apology, but it is a polemical apology which poses questions about the relation of an artist to his society that are just as inescapable to the spectator of 1982.

Mayakovsky had a prodigious spread of talents, as poet, painter, playwright, actor, film-script-writer, and graphic designer, and virtually all aspects of his cultural and political activities are represented in the exhibition. Splendid photographs of the poet, in an extraordinary range of moods, poses, and clothes, catch the eye first, from mugs of his early subversive days in the custody of the Tsarist police to a picture of him standing nonchalantly in Wall Street with shining shoes, coat over arm, hat, stick, and the air of one saying, "Take me to your broker." There are photographs of him reading his poems, stills from the films he starred in, views of his theatrical rehearsals with Meyerhold. One picture of his face in its coffin shows a strange reversion to the romantic handsomeness of an early profile, taken when he was seventeen. It is never hard to imagine the impact Mayakovsky made as a person. The exhibition, however, was devised to show his work, and the aim was to do this through an immediate, brocade-like whisking together of books, journals, newspapers, letters, photographs, drawings, posters, advertisements, notebooks, cartoons, caricatures, and ephemera of every kind.

The Royal Shakespeare Company has just announced its plans for 1982-3 at the Barbican Centre for Arts and Conferences, which will be the Company's new London home. The Centre will also house the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the London Symphony Orchestra. As well as the concert hall and theatres it contains three cinemas, the City Lending Library, an art gallery, and sculpture court, trade exhibition hall, seminar rooms, and two public restaurants. The main theatre, which will take the place of the Aldwych, was designed in close collaboration with Peter Hall, and although it seats over a thousand people has been designed to give an impression of intimacy.

The Centre will open officially on March 3, and after its annual seven-week visit to Newcastle, the RSC's first Barbican season will begin on June 9 with Trevor Nunn's production of *Henry IV, Part 1* and 2 with Joss Ackland as Falstaff, in

commentary

In an article of 1923 he had said of the recording of contemporary history that it was wrong to "despise material that seems insignificant. We must preserve every fragment... collect everything that relates to our struggle and hand it in to museums". Fortunately for us, he took this doctrine to heart in making up his own collection, and the result is a recreation not only of a life but of a whole period of cultural struggle and renewal and polemic and hope, caught in a touching web of often makeshift components. "Remember! we worked! without! artists! tradition! — in! a nineteen-degree! frost! and! in the smoke! of stoves! with! the sole! aim! of defending! the Soviet republic! of helping! to defend! to cleanse! to build." To emphasize this period of labour and immediate struggle, Mayakovsky in the original exhibition had insisted on a deliberately unprofessional mounting — drawing-pins and nails, pages torn from notebooks, free access by the public so that they could leaf through books and journals — but as the curator of the State Literary Museum in Moscow wryly points out in her introductory article in the catalogue (*Mayakovsky: Twenty Years of Work*, edited by David Elliott, 103pp. Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, £4.50. 0 505836 626 X), the author is now a classic and his ephemera have "considerable historic and aesthetic value", necessitating glass cases and no more thumbing through *A Cloud in Trousers* or *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*. Even if we cannot open them, it is astonishing and chastening to see to-day, row upon row, the originals of over eighty of Mayakovsky's books, many of them cheaply produced but with covers designed by the poet himself, or by El Lissitzky or Rodchenko or Larionov, in styles ranging from futurist to constructivist, with a startling, electric overall self-effect that makes most contemporary poetry books, with their feebly trim, well-printed, self-effacing elegance, seem like effete and ghostly simulacra rather than the precious life-blood of a master spirit.

The exhibition contains a lively selection of the posters and advertisements which Mayakovsky wrote and designed, both during the early years of the Revolution when the exhortations were mainly political, and right through the 1920s with messages directed at work, production, shopping, and domestic life. He was criticized, during his lifetime and after, for spending so much time and effort on jingles and sketches which by their nature could do little to further his reputation as a serious poet. In his late poem "With the bold voice", he tackled the criticism head-on, referring ironically to himself as a "latrine cleaner" and "slinger of boiled water", whom the Revolution mobilized to do his bit in inculcating good habits among the masses but who himself saw this as part of

his own purpose in an "anti-poetic" struggle to renew the whole language of and approach to poetry. He saw his own work as stretching in a very wide gamut from copywriting and agit-prop to high lyricism and a deep grandeur of socio-political statement. Many of his poster-verses are unexceptional but not very pithy.

When union men drop their tools they go first to evening schools, or they may have a distinctly hectoring quality. Don't be late, not even one minute. Get rid of persistent late-comers! The minutes add up and millions are lost, or they may merely throw light on social habits of the time.

Comrades — friends — behave properly! Don't spit on the floor, spit in the spittoon! while others have a curious charm, "Leda" — the tobacco is tasty and mild, it wouldn't even harm the lungs of a butterfly, or deviate into the grotesque.

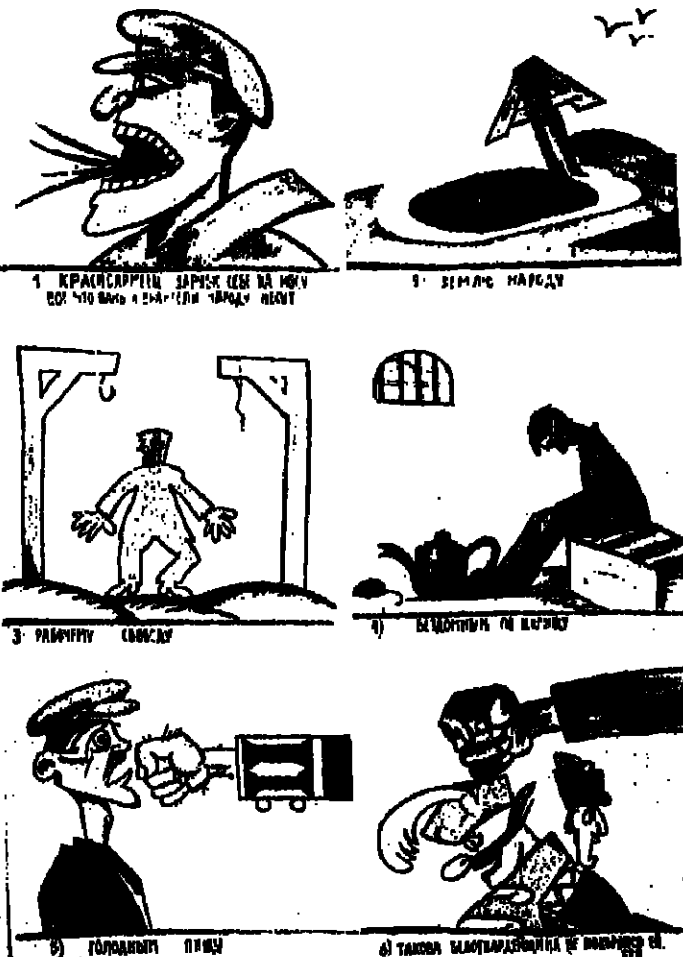
Better dummies have not been invented yet. I'll suck and suck till I'm dead. In most instances the accompanying designs and caricatures are, it should in fairness be added, an essential element of the poster's impact and their stylized punchy humour is often brilliant.

The most striking single exhibit is "To the Workers of Kursk who Exterminated the First Ore. A Provisional Memorial of the Work of Vladimir Mayakovsky": a portfolio of seven teen photomontages by a young art student, Yuri Rozhnok, who produced them as a tribute to the poet in 1924. These highly imaginative, often very detailed and very beautiful polychrome collages weave the words of Mayakovsky's poem "To the workers of Kursk" into a series of pictures reflecting the poem's imagery; even the words are cut-outs from various printed sources, and the "stepping" of the lines is imitated too: a labour of amazing devotion and difficulty, and to my mind superior to Rodchenko's better-known photomontages for the long poem *About This*.

Visitors to the exhibition who are not familiar with the poet or his period may well find it a somewhat daunting experience, since so many different kinds of material are crowded together and have to be seen both individually and as a total. The small light print of the catalogue of exhibits, too, is not for those with weak eyes. But the creative energies which must signal strongly to every visitor from this roomful of red screens have an exhilaration and a pathos that make it an occasion not to be missed.

Marthe has only a few days left to live and faces death with peasant stoicism. Her son David (David Yelland), a doctor, spells it out to Xenia, who refuses to accept it. The two women are both united and divided by a shared past. Although Xenia, saved Marthe's life when she was arrested by the Germans, Marthe later gave evidence against Xenia's father when he was tried and imprisoned by the Communists. Xenia's father had been a good man, liberal and kind. Kindness is not enough, says Marthe; the world requires justice; and her mood, the mood of the play, implies that she and her countrymen have now found it. While the two ageing women rake over the ashes of old battles, their children, Ann (played by Eleanor David) and David, fall in love and the world seems, through their eyes and ours, fresh and new; their elders' anger and bitterness become sad and rather comic. Unnecessary, as far as they are concerned.

When Bond is producing his best work, as in this play, his debt to Shakespeare is obvious. Xenia's father was a good man, liberal and kind. Kindness is not enough, says Marthe; the world requires justice; and her mood, the mood of the play, implies that she and her countrymen have now found it. While the two ageing women rake over the ashes of old battles, their children, Ann (played by Eleanor David) and David, fall in love and the world seems, through their eyes and ours, fresh and new; their elders' anger and bitterness become sad and rather comic. Unnecessary, as far as they are concerned.



A propaganda poster designed and written by Mayakovsky in July 1920, aimed at the Red Army soldier still engaged in civil war. The captions, run: 1) Look at what the Whites and General Wrangel are bringing. 2) Land for the people. 3) Freedom for the workers. 4) Shelter for the homeless. 5) Food for the hungry. 6) That's the White Army, don't submit, fight.

Confronting the past

By Eva Figs

Summer
Cottesloe Theatre

Edward Bond's new play is sub-titled "A European Play" and is set in an unnamed country which seems to be Yugoslavia; a sunny Mediterranean land with a growing tourist industry, occupied by the Germans during the war and subject to a social revolution after it. Three middle-aged survivors of that distant time confront the past and each other. Xenia (Anna Massey) is a member of the ousted ruling class who now lives in London but spends each summer in the house that was once the family home; Marthe (Yvonne Bryceland), formerly a servant in her household, is caretaker and part-owner of that house; the third survivor is a comely German tourist from the new hotel who, as a member of the occupying force during the war, had shot hostages in the island prison camp in which Xenia's father later died.

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Shakespeare is both obvious and enriching. Apart from his use of poetic imagery, he gives us a sense of action taking place at several levels and, perhaps most important of all, that a tension between irreconcilable opposites is of the very essence of drama. Tensions are manifold: between order and anarchy, justice and mercy, and — in this particular play — between life and death, light and dark; Marthe is dying, and tells us that it is death which gives us our enjoyment of life. The physical emphasis in the play is on such things as light, warmth, simple pleasures: the remembered horrors are all in people's heads, and in their speeches.

Summer is a modern rendering of *The Tempest*: the age-old quarrel between the exiled dispossessed Prospero and his kinsman is enacted by Xenia and Marthe; the boorish German soldier turned tourist with an appetite for sandwiches and ladies in bathing costumes is Caliban; and Ann and David are Ferdinand and Miranda, for whom youth and love transforms the world. The German tourist tells a frozen-faced Xenia of the horror that took place on the island beach on which they now stand. The sunny cliff once an execution bath, corpses floating in the sea. Afterwards Ann and David exclaim on the beauty of the place, which has now become a shrine to their love. They know about the past, but it has no reality for them.

This is the best play that Bond has written for a long time, and it puts him back in his rightful place in the very forefront of our living dramatists. His own direction, scenery and lighting emphasize sunlight and make the calm sea seem a living presence. The play depends on many long set speeches, but almost all of them make the required impact. Anna Massey gives a fine performance as an unlikely woman vulnerable but imprisoned in her own carapace, and David Yelland is moving as the dying woman's son, who changes from clinical rationality to blind grief when the quick death he had hoped for comes to his mother.

Tides

There are tides in the paper that lies on the desk. They are slow. They are burdened with junk. The circular disarray. Of piracy and empires, on the Middle Sea. They are bored with the half-life of scholarly myth. Bored with the gaze of the sublimed student. Crippled with nausea on a bus to the Gut. Where adventure appears in his glass of ale. As a species of maritime fraud. At which the police can only smile. As they sit by the fountain comparing their guns. There are tides in the ink compartments. Of every homocentric brasscase. Tides on every English desk. They are waiting for fools to afflict with the notion of time. As a pool of salt in a frame of sand. To afflict with the index of names. And the index of those without names. Which is bigger, and harder to freight. And will turn in its leather-and-brass-bound sleep. On the calmest evening, miles from nowhere. In waters turned milky by moonlight. That rattle like ream upon ream of papyrus. Spread over the floor and left blank. The boat is rigged. Someone ships out. Upon a sea that never breaks. Where storms are submarine. Where sinking leaves no watermark.

Sean O'Brien

Brian Aldiss

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Roland Barthes

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Victor Rothwell

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Based largely on Foreign Office records, this book explains how Britain came to stand where she does in the delicate East-West balance of power.
0224 01478 1 £16

Jonathan Cape

commentary

Authenticating the poet

By Valentine Cunningham

What Makes Rabbit Run? BBC TV

The tones of this most watchable fiftieth birthday tribute to John Updike are magnificently decorous. They never even itch to rise toward the unseemly. Low voiced relations, quiet readings from the softly-spoken novelist, a silent second wife, all imply a civilised glad of being a far cry from the loudly uncouth turps and from pushiness of all sorts. The tulling acoustic torpor makes, though, a startling background for the storm-warnings intensities of moral vocabulary that those quiet voices keep on quite naturally reaching for. Updike's publisher holds out "goodies" in the shape of new editions and such. "I need goodies," Updike warns. "More goodies," he says, opening his mail. He's "a good person," asseverates Linda Updike, his white-haired mom. He "throues light" in a dark world; he tells the truth. It's "good to be alive," says the man about himself, and he talks much of experiences being nice, of diligence and fulfilling tasks, of recognizing temptations to badness - "We too are warped by the Fall." Godliness and goodness, the "chain" of Lutheran "faith", are seen to hold him in a marvellously rendered network of familial pieties. In a snapshot his father, who "taught me how to be a man, an American male citizen", who transmitted joy, holds his boy close. The grown man, his mother's "special", "luminous" child, who constantly returns home to fix the yard and do the heavy farm chores, wobbles up a ladder to attach the maternal storm-windows, eats his mother's peanuts in her kitchen, promises to be measured for a new pullover. "See you at Thanksgiving," he says as he leaves, both nice and good.

But nothing is that simple, especially not a novelist who insists as much as Updike does on the meritorious pieties of dull, ordinary, average American life (we see him in his childhood's *Hallowe'en* near hear that he's his High School Class President and attends every reunion). "I'm inclined to be dull," declares Linda, but not too believably. Dullness is an uninviting condition to remain in, as Updike himself concedes. All the adulterous coupling in *Couples*, he says, is an escape from the "unbearable dullness" of middle-American life. Just so, he himself has escaped from ordinary Christianity: his Religion must cohabit intriguingly with Art and Sex. His poem entitled "Fellatio" (it has silver grain silos as well as eager secretaries in it) is brought on to illuminate "the kind of Christian I am". It refuses to be nice and rebuts the conventionally good. Grey-haired, grey-jacketed Updike is; but grey he is not.

In fact the programme's devoted decorum is unable to prevent it from nudging into the evident. Updike contradicts. He's in flight from New York; prefers craftsmanship to the city's hyping about (of which this show coinciding with the publication of *Rabbit Is Rich* is a part). He dislikes writers as subject, but he keeps projecting himself in the person of his double; Angstrom. And such narcissistic self-regard is never more dizzying evident than here. Updike reads, for example, from the text of "Of the Farm", sitting by a shelf of copies of his published texts, in the very farm-house room he is celebrating, while the camera picks out reading-decor. Such moments re-window as we hear his voice reading windows. "The Melancholy of Storm-Windows." On this occasion the "fist" (as he calls it) is also a performance. And very little in Updike's life is allowed to evade its potential for performance. Even the vegetation. We see a lot of the dogwood planted

at his birth in his parents' yard. It's a beautiful tree, and a touchstone of childhood memory. "In a sense" it is "me". As such, it's been made to perform before, in the fine childhood memoir "The Dogwood Tree", and it is made to do its stuff again and again here. It must have struck Updike early that his dogwood would make a wonderful opportunity for an attention-getting poet-authenticating revised version of the already famous dogwood in Eliot's "Gerontion".

Amid all this conscious self-arrangement this self-mythicalization doubled and redoubled, talk of satisfying ordinariness sounds a bit hollow. Nor can the goodness of consuming others as fiction fodder be taken simply as read. Old Mrs Updike doesn't mind being used, she says and the interviewer doesn't press her. But Updike's son David's about as he - ah - eventually - as it were - brings himself to kind of admit that - ah - he wouldn't hurry to follow his father in putting painful things about friends and relations into his own writing. And the first Mrs Updike is not even present, let alone asked for her views.

"I kept on", runs one of Updike's

Sweating it out

By Richard Combs

Body Heat
Warner West End Cinema, ABC Cinema, Fulham Road

"My whole history's burning up out there", comments the hero of *Body Heat*, watching a pinkish pall of smoke that drifts rather cosmetically out of the film's opening titles and hangs over his old neighbourhood. It is a tantalizing remark, suggesting a hero still involved with his history, for good or ill, a suffering witness to a world going up in flames. Subsequently, there are many other pointers to the amount of heat the film is supposedly giving off, the trial by fire that is about to be conducted. Characters are forever complaining about the sweltering climate in the small Florida town where the action takes place; a cop testifies to the craziness that comes over ordinary people in such conditions. But as busily as everyone sweats, and as restlessly as the camera prowls through this demimonde, the temperature of *Body Heat* remains obstinately low, the film fatally uninvolved with its own characters.

Take, for instance, the history of its hero, lawyer Ned Racine (William Hurt). After that opening reflection, it is never again referred to, except insofar as his past failures as a lawyer are eventually exploited in the web of conspiracy woven round him by Matty Walker (Kathleen Turner).

A score of sources

By Paul Driver

Punch and Judy
Opera Factory, Drill Hall, Chancery Street, London WC1

Harrison Birtwistle's opera *Punch and Judy* acquired a sort of classic status soon after its first performance at the 1968 Aldburgh Festival, but David Freeman's production for the English National Opera's experimental "Opera Factory" is only its third production. The reason it has had to wait fourteen years for its present tangible success is that although many people were struck from the start by the brutal, energetic score (Britten, however, was driven out of the Jubilee Hall by it), almost nobody had a good word for Stephen Pruslin's dense libretto (Auden was one of the few who did). How could such a pretentious tissue of riddles, allusions and puns, it was felt, possibly accord with a musical approach and dramatic don'ts of such violent straightforwardness? The piece was put aside.

In fact the libretto is one of the best ever devised for a composer. Without, as he has said, close discussions of the Strauss-Hoff-

He meets her by chance one night while in search of a breeze, engages in some casual but charged banter, and is quickly obsessed enough to respond to her apparently unconscious suggestion that he incredibly (and illegally) wealthy husband (Richard Crenna) is ripe for removal. Once the deed is done, he finds that her ambitiousness and cunningness know no bounds. That Matty remains largely a cypher - or an icon of femme fatality, who has walked out of some 1940s thriller of the blacker passions - is not important. She is dressed, very deliberately groomed, in fact, to fit the hero's fantasy, and her first appearance, all in inviting white, is both a neat joke on those 1940s film noir sources and on the yet unsuspecting hero.

It matters, however, that Ned remains similarly blank, that we learn nothing of the history he has lost, the erosion of values, that makes him susceptible to Matty's invitation. As in the recent *Janitor*, William Hurt seems to burrow quizzically into his part, emerging every so often with some small, bemused discovery. His performance encourages sympathy without actively inviting it. But he is unable to make sense of Racine's obsession, because the film is concerned with style rather than the study of character. Sex is presumably meant to be the key, but the film's much vaunted eroticism proves as cosmetic as that pall of smoke that has gutted Ned's past. It is as caressing and unfeeling as the shenanigans of *Emmanuelle*, or some particularly lubricious commercial.

mansthal type, Pruslin developed an understanding of operatic form and of the potential of the source material entirely correspondent with Birtwistle's own, handing over a structure of verses and refrains, interlocking cycles of action, symmetrical patterns and ingenious verbal matrices guaranteed to stimulate the composer's imagination to its fullest. Though his language is fragile and intellectualized, its emotional effect is exactly like that of Birtwistle's early music, one of hysterical shrillness.

Despite appearances to the contrary, Birtwistle is a musician of great intellectual sophistication. The categorization of *Punch* as a "source opera", one which assembles and re-views traditional manners and techniques without, strictly speaking, parodying them - its use of a Greek chorus-leader (Choregos) who symbolizes music itself and implies a root-questioning of music and opera's own business, and its allusions to such things as mummies, plays, *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Elmergans Wake* and other works by Birtwistle - these features belong as much to composer as to librettist.

Freeman's production is vivid and brazen and it cuts a few corners, the resulting smoothness is ample gain. The traditional *mise en scene* is

recollections of childhood, "sharply" tinged the passive and infusing figures of my father"; it was "a kind of ritual, for both of us, and he had endured my screams completely, nodding assent, like a midwife seeing at the birth of family pride. Family ritual, yes; even a kind of pride, maybe; but actual complicity? This superb programme, moving about family rituals and incidents, is distinguished not least for its own mild and discreet fashion, to wonder a lot about Updike's fiction loves to fail, as well as about the morality of such failing.

Body Heat is a film that struts much more than it steams. Ultimately it is an exercise in applied masochism, with a plot deliberately designed to evoke such antecedents as *Double Indemnity*, dialogue that crackles in the meant to touch on collective memory but not to call up any individual response of their own. This is film-making in the Brian De Palma school and writer-director Lawrence Kasdan proves efficient at whipping up the kind of plot that grips an audience because he knows exactly what nerves to play on.

Kasdan sharpened his craft as a writer on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and although *Body Heat* pretends to be much more sophisticated, it works as much the same kind of fantasy machine, it does invite audience complicity, not with the characters but with the film-maker. It demands our willingness to be hooked by the same old devices, a co-operation which Kasdan earns by proving he can serve them up with such brio, such an excess of style, and of course the morsels of sex. Contemporary relevance is otherwise wholly lacking: for all that it parodies of the present, *Body Heat* might as well have been made in the past. Occasionally, its pastiche of the noir style of heavily shadowed lighting and threatening angles trembles on the brink of parody - without quite allowing audiences the liberation of laughing at it. In the cinema of excess and indulgence alienation is an unprofitable effect.

there in the background, but the foreground is a two-tier children's playground featuring a swing incessantly and immoderately used by Pretty Polly and a slide for despatching the dead. The six characters double the roles of dancers to advantage. The action is relentless - much cheerful knocking around of toys and even a see-saw - and on the whole well co-ordinated. Occasionally it is imperfectly focused: would the libretto-less have grasped the particularities of Punch's quests for Polly? But that is begging the question of how much the opera also loses when it is staged. It makes an excellent piece of "invisible theatre" too.

The Endymion Ensemble brush away the difficulties of the score, demonstrating not only its muscularity and intermittent lyricism but also how beautifully composed in every sense it is. Graham (Titus and Omar Ebrahim as Choregos and Punch did sterling work. Hilary Western's Judy was rich-voiced while Marie Angel, as Pretty Polly, pluck top notes in a concluding "Spring has come" with purity and ease fit to scatter any notions that there has been a triumph of evil. *Punch and Judy* is solitary in twentieth-century opera. It is the opera Auden should have achieved (he once sought Birtwistle as collaborator) and never did.

commentary

The shoutmost shoviality

By Richard Brown

James Joyce may not have had much of an appetite to celebrate his twenty-fifth birthday. On February 2, 1907 he was nearing the end of a miserable stint as a bank clerk in Rome, trying to support a common-law wife, an eighteen-month-old son and with another baby on the way, still trying to find time to write. It is true that he had just signed a contract with Elkin Matthews to bring out a volume of his verse - but it was a volume that was never to bring him any royalties. He had also an agreement from Grant Richards to publish his volume of short stories, *Dubliners*, but he was already one year into a long discussion with Richards about the form that publication should take. Richards and his printers objected to words like "bloody" and to a description of a girl who "changed the position of her legs often" and these, and other problems, were to delay the eventual publication of the book until 1914.

Joyce was a poor man at the gate of literary fame and he had no way of knowing that the walls were ever to crumble before him. But by his fiftieth birthday he had become one of the best known literary figures in Europe. He had *Ulysses* behind him, which was not legally available in Britain or America but was nevertheless widely discussed and had sold more than 28,000 copies. He was already the subject of two biographies; he was a familiar figure in the literary and gossip columns of the newspapers and had been nine years into his new project which was one of the most ambitious and original writings in a time when spectacular experiment could be seen on all sides. When *transition* magazine, in which his "Work in Progress" was appearing, wanted to mark "James Joyce at the Half Century", it was not just a birthday party that they had in mind, but a "homage" by writers like Stuart Gilbert, Gogarty and Louis Gillet, which included Cé- sar Abin's well-known caricature of Joyce in the shape of a question mark and C. K. Ogden's translation of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" into his simplified language, "Basic English".

Joyce didn't live to see his seventy-fifth birthday. By 1957 his memory and his surviving works were at the centre of a great posthumous celebration. In that year the first volume of his letters was issued, edited by Stuart Gilbert, and in America the *James Joyce Review*, a periodical entirely devoted to articles on Joyce's work, was founded. Joyce could not celebrate but Joyceans did and there was, among other parties, an anniversary dinner held at the Kensington Restaurant in London, whose guest of honour was Joyce's indefatigable patron, Harriet Shaw Weaver, and which was attended by representatives from Joyce's publishers and such figures as Anthony Powell and Osbert Lancaster.

Few at that gathering could have foreseen the scale of the Joycean enterprise by the century of Joyce's birth. There are now three periodicals which deal exclusively with Joyce - the *James Joyce Quarterly*, *A Wake Newsletter* and the *James Joyce Broadsheet*. Joyce meets every other year on an international scale at the Joyce Foundation's regular Symposium. And in the off years they may get together anywhere from Dubrovnik to Albuquerque (the sites of the two main conferences in 1981). Nearly 6,000 items of Joycean criticism were recorded in the new bibliography produced by Robert Deming in 1977. There is a massive sixty-three volume publication of all of Joyce's manuscripts, drafts, notebooks and proofs, which is available to the serious student at \$4,500; and an ambitious project is under way to identify and eliminate the thousands of typographical errors that are known to have accumulated in all the published versions of *Ulysses*.

Plans for the centenary year are correspondingly extensive. The James Joyce Foundation is holding its Symposium in Dublin from June 14-19. There will be about seventy-five seminars of an academic kind and lectures by illustrious Joyce experts like Richard Ellmann, Hugh Kenner and Walton Litz. The Joycean side-shows sound far more ambitious than in previous years and include a full-scale re-enactment of the "Wandering Rocks" episode of *Ulysses*, masterminded by Denis Rose and including 150 participants and a vice-regal coach. Tom Stoppard, Anthony Burgess, Denis Potter and William Empson are among those participants promised by the organizers and the whole circus will culminate, as on previous years, with a "Bloomsday Banquet".

It was to be expected that the committed, largely American, Joyce Foundation and the Irish Tourist Board, would mount a large event of this kind, but the number of other academic and cultural celebrations taking place this February may be a surprise to many people. University College London offers a centenary lecture (February 2), a theatre performance (February 2), a lecture (February 4) and an exhibition, continuing throughout February, which displays some of the holdings of the James Joyce Centre, including early editions and association copies, items from the materials that Harriet Shaw Weaver collected concerning Joyce, and some notable items of Joyce criticism. London also marks the occasion with a series of Joyce films at the National Film Theatre (presented on February 1 and 2) and a one day programme on February 12 at the Polytechnic of North London.

Elsewhere in England there is a series of lectures co-ordinated by Lancaster College of Adult Education. Especially interesting, though, is the weekend conference at Leeds University entitled "James Joyce and Modern Literature" to be held on April 2-4. There is an excellent programme on offer including Frederic Jameson from Yale speaking on "Ulysses in History" and readings by Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin.

Conferences and activities are planned in Trieste, (where a bronze bust of Joyce has been unveiled), in Rome, in Copenhagen and in Tokyo, in Beirut, a commemorative week supported by the American University in Beirut, the Irish Embassy there, proudly boasts in its programme a "Centenary Message" written by Samuel Beckett which reads: "I welcome this occasion to: bow once again, before I go, deep down, before his heroic work, heroic being."

Radio-Televis Eirann produced a two-hour-long television documentary on Joyce for the centenary on February 2 and they promise, for "Bloomsday" in June, an unedited and uninterrupted reading of *Ulysses* on radio.

Few could surpass the grandiloquence of the Mayor of Washington who has pronounced:

Now, therefore, I, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, do hereby proclaim February 2nd as "James Joyce Day" in Washington DC and call upon all our residents to join with me in honouring James Joyce in grateful acknowledgement of the exceptionally outstanding contribution which he made to his fellow citizens and to all humanity.

Exceptionally outstanding? The mind boggles at the superlatives that will be needed. If all this continues, Dreadful visions of the future appear with twenty-four-hour, all-night radio stations broadcasting only *Ulysses*, *Wake* and Chinese-style wall-posters proclaiming the Joycean Revolution.

"Scotch please, plenty of water," is the grim of Derek Mahon's poet-figure in "I am Raftery". "I am reading Joyce in Braille and it's killing me."



Ego and alter ego. Joyce had a compulsive need to find likenesses between himself and other people. A fine slinger himself, he became obsessed with the promotion of the Irish tenor, John Sullivan (shown seated here) who he felt had suffered unjustified rebuffs in his profession as Joyce had in his own - he addressed a tribute to Sullivan "From a Daimed Writer to a Banned Singer". "Since I came to Paris," he remarked, "I have been introduced to a great number of recognized geniuses in literature, music, painting and sculpture; for me all these persons are quite sympathetic and friendly, but they are all, for me, perhaps, there is no perhaps about Sullivan's voice."

Writing against oblivion

By Michael Mason

James Joyce: A Touch of the Artist BBC Radio 3

Matters of origin, youthful background, career, personality, and so forth - biographical matters, in short - are inseparable from James Joyce's reputation not just because they figure largely in his work. That work, although strongly autobiographical, is also restrictively so. It was necessary in addition that the life should have shape and meaning in its own right, or give the impression of this. Joyce's term "exile", for example, was a way of conferring these qualities on the general fact of his residence in continental Europe, a fact never represented in the autobiographical fiction.

The biographical vein has always been conspicuous in writing and talk about Joyce. While he was still in his forties no less than three lives of Joyce (by Gorman, Gilbert, and Louis Golding) were under discussion, at Joyce's own prompting. Published controversy about his life started, or surfaced, within months of his death. People have always remonstrated about Joyce, incontinently. Sometimes they have done so on the radio, and James Joyce: A Touch of the Artist continued the tradition: with some fresh recollections from such Parisian acquaintances as Maria Jolas and Jacques Benoist-Méchin. This is an area full of danger. People reminding about Joyce have sometimes made mistakes that stagger credulity. Oliver St John Gogarty's remarks about Joyce's life are as notable for their ludicrous inaccuracy as much as for their malice.

The inclusion of a brief extract from Gogarty was the only important blemish in the programme; however, Craig Raine put together a series of contributions from friends of Joyce, critics; and, most prominently, certain contemporary writers: Updike, Heaney, McEwan, and some others. The critics want on a little too much about Joyce as a moralist, perhaps, but the balance was redressed by the writers, who, naturally, put an

emphasis on his towering technical gifts. Updike spoke of the satisfaction which a phrase such as "the felly harshed against the curbstone" gives, and Seamus Heaney described the opening chapters of *Ulysses* with extraordinary eloquence - under the rubric that they were "much better than most verse". After this, anxieties about whether Joyce approved of Molly Bloom seemed, though relevant to Joyce, a good deal less relevant to the question of his greatness. Ian McEwan sustained the subject of morals, it is true, but he spoke inwardly, as a writer, about the moral countenance of some of the *Dubliners* stories. On "Counterparts" he was especially penetrating.

But the critical heart of the programme came with Craig Raine's remarks on Joyce and "oblivion". He connected such things as the end of "The Dead" and Joyce's minute enquiries about the Dublin of his youth. The idea that Joyce's art seeks to counter time's snow-like obliteration of individual human lives, "writing against oblivion" in Raine's phrase, was fresh and profound - and also highly apt. For the fuss about the centenary took on a new aspect, as a token of Joyce's success in resisting obliteration in his own case. Western culture has a soft spot for Joyce, as Greta Conroy had for Michael Furey. We are all "great with him".

As a sound presentation the programme was peculiar. There was a certain amount of music, but of such a timid, occasional, and puzzling sort that it sometimes seemed a bit like interference from another station. The readings were odd; Joyce passages were delivered in a growly voice quite unlike his own, and Ezra Pound, mysteriously, was privileged with an impersonation of his manner by Craig Raine himself whenever he was quoted. But programmes of this type aspire to the condition of writing, and do not stand or fall by their success as radio productions. Indeed the main test of their value is whether they surround the fact of their aural transience, and are worth recording and transcribing. The contributions of the writers interviewed alone were enough to give this programme permanent interest.

New Oxford books: Literature

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Dame Helen Gardner

Dame Helen's vigorous and timely defence of traditional and literary values grows from her concern over the lack of faith in the study of literature among some of the ablest of modern critics. Her own lucidity, readability, range of reference, and passionate concern for literature are themselves powerful affirmations of her argument. £12.50 11 February

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Edited by Miriam J. Benkovitz

This second edition testifies to the continuing interest in Ronald Firbank. It lists for the first time publications about him and brings up to date the published titles by him. Second edition £17.50

The Old English Exodus

Texts, Translation, and Commentary by J.R.R. Tolkien Edited by Joan Turville-Petre

The Old English "Exodus" is based on full notes for a series of lectures delivered to a specialist class in Oxford in the 1930s and 1940s. The work is still rewarding in extract, and the editor has here attempted to show Tolkien's methods and preserve the more enduring results. £7.95

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This catalogue lists all the fifteenth-century printed books now preserved in the libraries of twenty-three men's and four women's colleges of the University of Oxford, the Taylor Institution of Modern Languages, the Ashmolean Museum, the Museum of the History of Science, the University Archives, the University Press, the Philosophical Faculty Library, and the religious houses of Blackfriars, Campton Hall, and Pusey House. Illustrated £40

Bounds of out Bounds

A Compass for Recent American and British Poetry Roberta Berke

In this lively survey of American and British poetry from 1960 to the present, prize-winning poet Roberta Berke presents perceptive guidelines for understanding contemporary poetry. Among the poets whose work is discussed are Philip Larkin, D.J. Enright, Richard Wilbur, Howard Nemerov, Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, John Berryman, Anne Sexton, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Ted Hughes, Charles Tomlinson and Seamus Heaney. £11.50

Oxford University Press

An old-fashioned radical: Richard Ellmann and Craig Raine on James Joyce

In preparing his BBC Radio 3 programme *James Joyce: A Touch of the Artist* (reviewed on page 135), which was produced by Judith Blum, and broadcast last week for the centenary of Joyce's birth, Craig Raine recorded an interview with Richard Ellmann, who has been working on a revised edition of his biography of Joyce, to be published this autumn by OUP. The following transcript of parts of the interview which were not broadcast is printed by kind permission of the BBC.

Professor Ellmann began by discussing some new information which has come to light about Joyce's personal life and about certain aspects of his work. Information which will not be published until the book appears. The conversation turned to Ellmann's views, now, about Joyce "as a person," and to questions about Joyce's dealings with contemporary writers and influence on later ones, and about his politics.

Ellmann: In going over these pages in order to make insertions and corrections, I found all my old affection for Joyce renewed. I'm quite aware that he was far from a perfect person. I don't think he would particularly have wanted to be perfect. He asks: "As Parsifal asks - who is good? And it's clear that there's no answer to that question. But at the same time, I think that on the whole Joyce was, like Bloom, good in the sense of humanity, decent, and that he tried to be helpful. He would always lend money if he could to needy friends. He tried to help Jewish refugees to get out of Nazi Germany, to get settled elsewhere. He was always worried about his friends' illnesses, about their children, took a great interest in all that. He confided all his woes to them too, but he was thinking to listen to theirs as well. I think on the whole that he was a rather decent man, as he thought himself to be.

Raine: It's my impression, reading your edition of Joyce's letters, that a change takes place in him. Early on, he's actually a very ruthless character indeed, even where his family are concerned. He writes to Stanislaus (this is 1905) "I will make everything and everybody stand out of my way, as I did before now." Later in the same year, in December, he writes to his Aunt Josephine that he's thinking of leaving Nora. He says: "Nora does not seem to make much difference between me and the rest of the men she has known, and I can hardly believe that she is justified in this." And he projects the possibility that he will in fact leave her. Of course he didn't.

What do you think changed in Joyce to make him this more generous person? And, in fact, really abjectly uxorious by the end of his life?

Ellmann: I think it was always present in him. When he asked Nora Barnacle to go off to Europe with him without being married, he wrote her a very honest letter, explaining the risks he was running and making clear what his wife were: why he couldn't marry her, because he didn't believe in marriage. And I believe that he was always considerate of the feelings of other people, although I grant you that there is an element of ruthlessness which was not doubt induced partly by poverty, and partly by his sense of the necessity to leave Ireland and to become his own man. I suppose that it was always mixed, but he was obviously always tender towards his mother. No doubt he told her things that she disapproved of, but it was a way of being close to her, even if she was upset by them. And he was close to his father, in a peculiar way too, throughout. His father always knew that he could write him and get a little money from him, and there is even a late letter which I found, written shortly before his father's death, where Joyce replies to his request for money, and explains why he can only send a moderate amount.

Ellmann: In going over these pages in order to make insertions and corrections, I found all my old affection for Joyce renewed. I'm quite aware that he was far from a perfect person. I don't think he would particularly have wanted to be perfect. He asks: "As Parsifal asks - who is good? And it's clear that there's no answer to that question. But at the same time, I think that on the whole Joyce was, like Bloom, good in the sense of humanity, decent, and that he tried to be helpful. He would always lend money if he could to needy friends. He tried to help Jewish refugees to get out of Nazi Germany, to get settled elsewhere. He was always worried about his friends' illnesses, about their children, took a great interest in all that. He confided all his woes to them too, but he was thinking to listen to theirs as well. I think on the whole that he was a rather decent man, as he thought himself to be.

Raine: What's the evidence for that? The only comment that Joyce made on *The Waste Land* is the very funny parody he wrote.

Ellmann: Yes - of course that's a form of respect, I suppose. But a woman did say to him, "Well, I can't understand *The Waste Land*." And Joyce said: "Do you have to understand it?" I once had a chance to tell this to Eliot, who was very much pleased by this response, and obviously would have made it himself. I think that Joyce had only a moderate respect for Eliot, but he had some respect for him. As for *Ulysses*, I don't think one can complain that he didn't do enough for him. He actually got Valery Larbaud to read *Ulysses*, encouraged the critic to write fulsomely about him. And in every way he mixed up Svevo, I think, with the necessity to leave Ireland and to become his own man. I suppose that it was always mixed, but he was obviously always tender towards his mother. No doubt he told her things that she disapproved of, but it was a way of being close to her, even if she was upset by them. And he was close to his father, in a peculiar way too, throughout. His father always knew that he could write him and get a little money from him, and there is even a late letter which I found, written shortly before his father's death, where Joyce replies to his request for money, and explains why he can only send a moderate amount.

Raine: Eliot said: "When a great poet has lived, certain things have been done once and for all and cannot be achieved again. But on the other hand, every great poet adds out of his own complexity, material which, if we apply this to Joyce, would you say that his work has been a literary cul-de-sac? That, *Ulysses* can't be imitated any more, than *Tristram Shandy*? Or do you think that his work has been a strong and useful influence, and if so on whom?

Ellmann: Well, that's a large question. But I think I would have to say that Joyce seems to me the most radical writer of the century. By that I mean that he's down at the roots of consciousness, including the unconscious. He's down at the roots of art, and also at the roots of language. We all assume, or would like to assume, that language is fixed and stable, but in fact of course it's very fluid and Joyce is the first, I think, to make this clear. Now as far as experiments in language are concerned, there haven't been many, though one finds bits of *Finnegans Wake* in Sean O'Casey's autobiography. So far as his development of consciousness, his exploration of everyone seems to be following him in that. And so far as his exploration of the roots of art and his experiments with all kinds of different narrative points-of-view, unreliable narrators and the like are concerned, everybody seems to be following him too. So I would say that he's been a very important influence, that is one of the signs of his greatness as perhaps the principal innovator in twentieth-century literature and perhaps in the literature of all much longer period than that.

Raine: What you're suggesting is a general diffusion.

Ellmann: Yes. But I would be willing to name more specific instances too, if you want those.

Raine: Well I wondered, for instance - one can obviously pick out small things: the O'Casey you've mentioned; Orwell, absolutely totally in my view, copies the "Circe" episode in *A Clergyman's Daughter* and never tries it again - but I was thinking of someone like Nabokov, who seems to me to bear the imprint of Joyce's influence. There are some very clear verbal parallels. This is from *Invitation to a Beheading*: "She lit up" - a cigarette - and the smoke she exhaled from her nostrils was like a pair of tucks." Now in "Circe", one of the whores spouts "walrus smoke" through her nostrils. Exactly the same image. Do you think Nabokov is influenced by Joyce?

Ellmann: I'm sure he was, and we've recently had a book of his lectures on Joyce which gave at Cornell. The book which seems closest to Joyce is *Pale Fire*, where the character of Kinbote and the opposition between Kinbote and Shade is very Joycean, very much reminiscent of the "Cyclops" episode. Kinbote is a thorough-going villain and this is never made clear because we hear it always from his point of view, just as we hear it all from Therapist's point of view in the "Cyclops" chapter.

There are some rather pleasant incidents of their friendship - because they did know each other. Perhaps the most telling one is that Nabokov once had to give a lecture on Proust, and he knew that there would be no audience whatsoever, which the Hungarian football team, which he was coaching, was forcing to attend. But when he went to speak at the hall, finding that it would be otherwise entirely empty, he saw that one at least of the seats was occupied by the principal writer of his time who had come, feeling sympathetic to his situation and wanting him not to be left all alone in this lecture hall.

You know, as far as the question of influence is concerned, I am always amused when Anthony Burgess talks about Joyce, because he always insists that Joyce has had no influence whatsoever. But one has only to look at the end of any of Burgess's novels, or his essays, to see that he is full of Joyce. I don't mean that Burgess doesn't have his own flair, but he certainly has read Joyce carefully.

Raine: We agree about this, that Joyce's influence is everywhere. Yet oddly, Joyce himself didn't think of himself as a pattern-book for other writers. There's a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, in 1919. He says: "Each successive episode dealing - rhetoric or music or dialectic - leaves behind it a burnt-up field. Since I wrote 'Sirens' I find it impossible to listen to music of any kind." So he really thought of himself as exhausting a particular patch. But I don't think he did.

Ellmann: Music has probably survived him, yes.

Raine: What about his politics? In 1915, Pound writes to Joyce - they're talking about the possible publication of *Portrait of the Artist* - "It would be better if possible to publish in England. France is very much occupied with the War, news of which may have reached you." This kind of thing seems to be the received idea about Joyce and politics, that he was so completely the artist, he was absolutely uninterested in politics. Frank Budgen says that Joyce never talked politics. And when you look at the books - you look at *Ulysses* and the Russo-Japanese War gets two mentions, I think, in the entire work. There isn't much to build on. But "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" in *Dubliners* dismisses the idea of politics, really. It's for sentimentalists.

I think he started out as a socialist - he called himself that - and gradually he became an anarchist. He began to disapprove of all governments increasingly as he got older. But he always retained a political feeling in the world, the simple people, always for individual liberty, always very contemptuous of Hitler and Mussolini and always eager to do what he could to help refugees from Nazi Germany.

Raine: So it's really the personal life he believes in. There's actually a very useful quotation which sums up what you've been saying. This is a letter to Stanislaus in 1907 in which he says that he's lost all interest in socialism: "Yet I have certain ideas I would like to give form to. Not as a doctrine, but as a continuation of the expression of myself, which I now see I began in *Chamber Music*. These ideas, or instincts, or impulses, or intuitions, may be purely personal. I have no wish to codify myself as an anarchist or socialist or reactionary."

Ellmann: Yes, I think, though, that there are other remarks which indicate that he recognized that to be totally oblivious to politics would be a defect. I remember one letter in which he says that the thing which distinguishes Turgenyev from lesser writers in Russia is his political awareness. And I think Joyce felt that he had political awareness, even though he was not active in politics in the way that we expect people to be in our present-day political scene.

One of the many books published to coincide with the James Joyce centenary is *James Joyce's Odyssey* by Frank Delaney (199p, Hodder and Stoughton, £8.95, 0 340 26885 9), a re-creation of James Joyce's city of 1904. The author maintains that because it escaped destruction in the Second World War, Dublin is, unlike most European cities, very much as it was at the beginning of the century. The book is divided into eighteen chapters, each corresponding to the episodes of *Ulysses*, and each chapter follows the routes of the novel's principal characters. The *James Joyce's Odyssey* is illustrated throughout by maps, street plans, archive pictures and photographs specially taken for the book by Jorge Lewinski.

The February 1982 issue of the *James Joyce Broadsheet* (annual subscription £3 in Europe, £4.50 or £10 overseas) James Joyce Centre, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT) contains a supplement which gives details of the events planned for the centenary in seven countries.

of conjunction between their careers, in that Griffith was active in political means what Joyce was attempting to do by cultural means. Then of course he became somewhat less pleased with the government. Griffith died, and Joyce came repressive in its turn. In 1930 state appeared to reduce individual liberty even further than had been done under the British occupation, and there certainly hadn't been much individual liberty at that time.

But I like to remember that in 1914, just after the War was declared, Joyce decided that he would put together a group of seven articles which he had written for the *Thames* newspaper, the *Piccolo della Sera*, Home Rule and about John O'Leary, the old Fenian, and related subjects. And he said to this Italian publisher in Rome, "I would like to publish these. I think that while they have no literary value whatsoever, they give a full picture of that situation and it is just at the moment when Ireland is coming into the news." The book was not published, but it seems to me a pity it wasn't, because it would have shown that Joyce was interested in the future of his country in a very particular way and was quite well informed about it.

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What strikes me, as a historian, about Lukács, as presented by George Steiner, is his intolerable presumption. "Could anyone except Stalin have withstood the terrible impact of German invasion..." The question cannot be answered. But what can be shown is that without Stalin's murderous paranoia and his fatuous trust in Hitler the invasion could have been far more successful; resisted; and your own pages (I refer to Kyril FitzLyon's review in the same issue of Nikolai Tolstoy's book, *Stalin's Secret War*) show what was the manner in which Stalin conducted the subsequent war and, in Lukács's complacent view, made of backward Russia one of the world's two super-powers. Lukács was one of those who justified the incalculable suffering which Stalin and the CPSU inflicted on the Russian people by a suppression of some of the truth and a perversion of the rest. If this is not *raishon des clerics*, what is? The same hateful trait is detectable in his question (I paraphrase), "Do we not accept the judicial murders of the Girondins, Danton and Robespierre as necessary crises in the ultimately humane logic and libertarian dynamics of the French Revolution?" No, Sir, "we" do not: we do not pretend to know what is "necessary", and our conscience is not so acute as to allow us to acquiesce in human suffering in the present because some dialectician says that all will be well in the future.

Does all this matter? Yes it does. Lukács, in Dr Steiner's presentation of him, embodies the fatuous arrogance of the intelligentsia which has done so much harm. It is amusing that Lukács should condemn Western liberal intellectuals to a future as a *behaglicher Leerlauf*. He wanted to be a big wheel, and despised those in the West who were more humble and more honest in their aspirations. He was profoundly anti-democratic and anti-humane (his only redempting

Georg Lukács

Sir, - I have a great admiration for George Steiner, especially for his erudition, his intellectual generosity, and the lucidity of his prose. Normally one would not dream of challenging one of his articles, especially one dealing with a subject of which I am almost totally ignorant. But the issues he raises in his discussion of Georg Lukács (January 22) are so important that I find I cannot keep silent when it seems to me that Dr Steiner is going wrong.

Does he quite realize the effect his review can create in the mind of a detached reader? I note that, as usual, he puts the facts and the possible interpretations of the case fairly before us, and few, I imagine, will want to controvert much of what he says. But in his desire to be fair to Lukács, to rescue some shred of claim for his greatness, for his standing as a teacher, he makes some fearful concessions: concessions which we of the liberal persuasion (to use Dr Steiner's own phrase) cannot afford and must not allow to go unchallenged.

The case of Lukács, as it emerges from Dr Steiner's account, is commonplace in our appalling times. A towering vanity, nourished by the knowledge that he possessed great gifts, and shielded from reality by the dreadful propensity to abstraction of the German philosophical tradition, made him for most of his life, indeed to the time of his very death, the accomplice and apologist of some of the worst criminals of our age. Set against such a monstrous perversion of the soul and the intellect his various literary achievements - shrewd comment on Thomas Mann, a revaluation of Walter Scott (as if Scott, in any significant sense, needed his services) - are seen to be utterly unimportant, except to those corrupted like himself. Yet this is the man whose rebuke of the West, of America, of "technocratic capitalism", Dr Steiner seems to endorse. This is the man whose excuses for his own misconduct Dr Steiner allows to pass unrefuted.

What strikes me, as a historian, about Lukács, as presented by George Steiner, is his intolerable presumption. "Could anyone except Stalin have withstood the terrible impact of German invasion..." The question cannot be answered. But what can be shown is that without Stalin's murderous paranoia and his fatuous trust in Hitler the invasion could have been far more successful; resisted; and your own pages (I refer to Kyril FitzLyon's review in the same issue of Nikolai Tolstoy's book, *Stalin's Secret War*) show what was the manner in which Stalin conducted the subsequent war and, in Lukács's complacent view, made of backward Russia one of the world's two super-powers. Lukács was one of those who justified the incalculable suffering which Stalin and the CPSU inflicted on the Russian people by a suppression of some of the truth and a perversion of the rest. If this is not *raishon des clerics*, what is? The same hateful trait is detectable in his question (I paraphrase), "Do we not accept the judicial murders of the Girondins, Danton and Robespierre as necessary crises in the ultimately humane logic and libertarian dynamics of the French Revolution?" No, Sir, "we" do not: we do not pretend to know what is "necessary", and our conscience is not so acute as to allow us to acquiesce in human suffering in the present because some dialectician says that all will be well in the future.

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grace seems to have been that he was also, in his conduct, profoundly inconsistent). He is an awful warning which, in an era when on both Right and Left, I once more hear the trumpets of doctrinaire absolutism, should be presented as such. I deeply regret that Dr Steiner, who is of course anything but an ideologue himself, could not quite bring himself to do the job.

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'The Dirty Bits'

Sir, - In his entertaining review of *The Dirty Bits* (January 22) Gavin Ewart seems to have got it slightly wrong about Aubrey. "Manuscriptation" is a fine word but is not what Aubrey wrote - at least according to Oliver Lawson Dick's 1949 edition. In "A Private Essay only" Aubrey set out his characteristically odd views on education. He says, for example, that scholars should not be beaten about the head: thumbscrews were a better punishment. Swiss, Dutch and Scottish boys made good pupils, but apparently attempts at teaching French boys are a waste of time: "like the shearing of Hoggies they make a great crie and little wool: their minds do chiefly run on the propagation of their race." In this respect the French seem merely to be more precocious than the lads of other nations, who become just as unteachable with the onset of puberty. Aubrey's friend Mr J. Ward had found "by experience, that the only time of Learning is from nine to sixteen, afterwards Cupid begins to tyrannize". Furthermore (and this is presumably the passage Mr Ewart is thinking of) none other than Thomas Hobbes had told him that "O. Duke of Buckingham had at Paris when he was about twenty years old, desired Him to read Geometrie to him: but his Grace had great natural parts, and quickness of wit; Mr Hobbes read, and his Grace did not apprehend, which Mr Hobbes wondered at: at last, Mr Hobbes observed that his Grace was at masturbation (his hand in his Codpiece). This is a very improper age for that reason for learning."

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Quarto, 56 Doughty Street, London WC1.

Dostoevsky and the Jews

Sir, - I am happy that Joseph L. Whelan (Letters, January 15) concurs with the main point I made in reviewing David Goldstein's *Dostoevsky and the Jews* (July 1) - that there is an essential difference between the political polemical and the novelist in Dostoevsky. What surprises me is his confidence that the invocation of the term "messianism" somehow excludes any consideration of paranoia, and that one cannot speak meaningfully of a collective paranoia which is then manifested in an ideology. The recent, horrific example of Nazism, emphatically a messianic movement and clearly an extreme instance of collective paranoia, is allowed to refute both these assumptions. To be sure, Dostoevsky's xenophobia was directed towards a variety of targets, but, as David Goldstein has amply documented, the insidious agents of world Jewry enjoyed pride of place in his thinking as forces of the Antichrist. The fact that this antisemitic fantasy parook of what Joseph L. Whelan calls "the mysterious and awesome quality of prophesy" of Slavophile ideology hardly diminishes its potency as an expression of collective paranoia.

ROBERT ALTER,
1475 Le Roy Avenue, Berkeley, California 94708.

'Language of the Underworld'

Sir, - Anthony Burgess, in his review (January 22) of David W. Maurer's *Language of the Underworld*, points out that "China Street pig" meant a Bow Street runner in the late eighteenth century. In Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821), "pig" is defined as "thief-taker". It would be interesting to know whether the word vanished from London usage until re-imported from the United States in the 1960s, or continued to have a subterranean life all the time.

PERCY SELWYN,
Royal Crescent Lodge, Royal Crescent Mews, Brighton.

Camus and War Crimes

Sir, - Robert Boyers in his review (January 15) of *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*, by James D. Wilkinson, dishonours the memory of Camus in accepting what is apparently Wilkinson's view that he "threw his weight on the side of the avengers" in the punishment of war crimes in 1945.

Personally I am all for punishing war crimes whoever commits them, winners or losers; treason is another matter. But in the circumstances of 1945, Camus, in January of that year, signed the petition to save the life of Robert Brasillach, a notorious fascist. De Gaulle rejected the petition. On a later occasion, when Céline wanted to return to France, Camus wrote that "political justice demands me". We should honour him for saying that.

PETER LEVI,
Austins Farm, Stonesfield, Oxford.

Marcel Proust

Sir, - Phyllis Grosskurth's review of my book *Proust and the Art of Love* (June 12) has just come to my attention. I am pleased with the favourable treatment of the book but notice several factual errors in the review. I would like to correct the most important of these.

Phyllis Grosskurth discusses my book along with two others: Bernard Straus's *The Maladies of Marcel Proust* and Randolph Spittler's *Proust's Recherche*. About midway through the review we are told that Spittler's book, though it does not explain "the mystery of genius" possibly explains how a genius utilizes his suffering. And the review continues: "As Spittler says, 'The pages of writing are the suffering, but they are also the means of banishing the suffering. They are, to borrow a central paradox from Proust's descriptions of love, the sickness and the cure.'" This quotation is not from Spittler but from my book *Proust and the Art of Love*, where it occurs on page 96.

J. E. RIVERS,
Box 4248, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

Alliance of Literary Societies

Sir, - Eight years ago, the George Eliot Fellowship took the lead in the formation of the Alliance of Literary Societies, an association whose fourteen members were willing to come to the aid of other members societies should a building etc with literary associations be threatened by demolition or damaging change.

Recently, the Fellowship has had reason to call on the Alliance, and were so impressed by the value of having friends at such a time of

threat that we decided that the Alliance must be enlarged. All those literary societies of whose existence we knew were invited to join, and I am pleased to tell you that only a very small handful have not replied. The Alliance, therefore, now has twenty-eight members who are willing to add their voice to any protest which is considered necessary by any other member. We now feel we are a powerful and persuasive voice in the cause of preservation.

KATHLEEN ADAMS,
71 Stepping Stones Road, Coventry CV5 8JT.

'The Princess'

Sir, - Tennyson did indeed write "Rhodope, that built the pyramid" (*The Princess* II, 68), and his editors have retained his spelling. As a serious student of his classics, he had of course read Herodotus; and he may well have remembered that Herodotus calls her "Rhodopis", as George Huxley (Letters, December 18) points out. Tennyson's own gloss, first published in the Eversley Edition of his works (1907-8), explains why he calls her "Rhodope": he was alluding to *Henry VI* I, vi, 21-2, "A stately pyramid to her I'll rear / Than Rhodope's of Memphis ever was".

I leave it to an editor of Shakespeare to explain that poet's spelling.

SUSAN SHATTO,
University of Edinburgh, Department of English Literature, 5 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JX.

Information, please

Irish Migrations to Britain 1780s-1920s: any references in private papers or in family tradition, especially where they shed light on official, party political, or church attitudes.

L. W. Brady,
Department of Social Studies, Liverpool Polytechnic, Walton House, 52 Tithebarn Street, Liverpool L2 2NG.

Edward Johnston (1872-1944), calligrapher: whereabouts of any surviving copies of the dust-jackets of the novels *The Narrow World* (1930) and *Green Girl* (1932), both by his daughter, Priscilla Johnston; or other similar ephemeral material; for a bibliography.

Justin Howes,
21 Gledge Gardens, London SE21 7BE.

Umericks: examples of the form which have not previously appeared in anthologies; in particular, Umericks dealing with contemporary figures, characters from fiction or mythology, and poems, plays and novels; for a new collection to be published by Penguin Books in 1983; payment will be made for any material included.

E. O. Parrott,
PO Box No 389, St John's Wood SDO, Lodge Road, London NW8.

Séverine (Caroline Rémy Ghépard) 1855-1929, journalist, feminist, critic, revolutionary: letters, journals, personal or professional reminiscences sought for a research study.

Susan Tarrow,
Department of Romance Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-0197.

Oscar Wilde: any information concerning Wilde's period in prison, especially relating to his efforts to petition the Home Secretary for early release, medical, and psychiatric reports, letters etc; for a study.

Michael A. P. Shortland,
Department of Philosophy, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

James Hutton (1726-97): in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, written c.1771, two near-illegible literary or political references, apparently to "Princess Obbea" and "Yufon Yorum". In new counties you neither know where to go, and if you should there is nothing to be seen. And Dame Nature's petticoat is not so saffly lured as that of Princess Obbea and Yufon Yorum. Can any reader elucidate these references?

Joan Jones,
6 Greenhill Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4BS.

Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923), surgeon and travel writer: any letters or reminiscences; for a critical biography to be published in 1983.

Stephen Trombly,
c/o Royal Institute of British Architects Journal, 66 Portland Place, London W1.

Valery Bryusov: "Ne nado brosat sveit'nik za to to'ko, chto eto ne sointse." (There's no need to throw out the lamp merely because it's not the sun!); in a letter of 1897 to Mark Kinitzky (Samygin), quoting an unidentified English writer in Russian translation; source of the original; for an edition of Bryusov's letters.

R.D. Davies,
Department of Russian Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

V. I. Lenin: "It would not matter one bit, if three quarters of the human race perished. The important thing is that the remaining quarter should be communists"; source of these words of Lenin's.

M. N. Leggett,
School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London WC1.

Richard Lassels: his description of the gardens in San Pietro in Arenia in the *Voyage of Italy* (1670) as like "the Charming Paradise of the King of the Mountains antiently"; source of the allusion.

John Dixon Hunt,
Department of English, Bedford College, Regent's Park, London NW1.

James Hutton (1726-97): in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, written c.1771, two near-illegible literary or political references, apparently to "Princess Obbea" and "Yufon Yorum". In new counties you neither know where to go, and if you should there is nothing to be seen. And Dame Nature's petticoat is not so saffly lured as that of Princess Obbea and Yufon Yorum. Can any reader elucidate these references?

Joan Jones,
6 Greenhill Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4BS.

Margaret Kennedy

Sir, - Having seen a notice under "Information, please" (December 25) from Margaret Keith of Ontario, concerning a projected biography and new edition of the works of the late Margaret Kennedy, I hope I may help to prevent confusion if I confirm the fact, stated in the TLS of November 13, that a study of the life and works of this novelist is already in preparation by Violet Powell, whose review of two of the novels, just revised by Virago, appeared in that number. As Margaret Kennedy's daughter and literary executor, I am glad of this evidence of revived interest in her work, which is still in copyright, but now, sadly, mostly out of print.

JULIA BIRLEY,
133 Sydenham Hill, London SE26 6LW.

'To The Lighthouse'

Sir, - "But this and his pleasure in it, in the phrases he made, in the ardour of youth, in his wife's beauty, in the tributes that reached him from Swansea, Cardiff, Exeter, Southampton, Kidderminster, Oxford, Cambridge - all had to be depressed and concealed under" - the phrase "talking nonsense" (Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*). Can anyone explain why Kidderminster?

ALAN SHELSTON,
16 Enville Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire.

to the editor

'The Pursuit of Signs'

Sir, - Having suggested in my review of Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs* (January 1) that the most important distinction for any fiction is not that between *Story* and *Discourse* but between what is *true* in it and what is *invented*, I agree with Richard Yarrow (Letters, January 15) that "if fiction must defer to truth, then we must know more about the composition of this truth". He also says, however, that "the awakening of our critical capabilities and sensibilities" through the study of Poetics "will destroy our sense of the truth in fiction" if that truth is a mere glib matter of "real human nature".

This is the crucial point. "Poetics" can readily suggest that the apparent existence of human nature in literature is determined by an authorial context, its conventions and our expectations; and plausibly argue that what seems like nature and life in Shakespeare, Fielding, or Jane Austen, is actually processed for our recognition inside a closed literary circuit.

In this way Poetics produces a confusion between the means and the effect. Such new styles of investigative terminology may perform a useful service, and yet it would be a dull reader, or cinema-goer, who could think only of how a book or film was made, never as an impression of life on those who are living it. We can try to do both. But, paradoxically, what Richard Yarrow calls "the composition of the truth" cannot ultimately, where art is concerned, be a matter for investigative analysis. We can ask and find out how the illusions of art are achieved, how the character X is created, but we cannot get behind the question: "Is X true to life?" Poetics cannot and does not want to answer it. It concentrates instead, and often with great subtlety, on the means. But criticism cannot afford to ignore the simplicity of ends, the imponderable problems of mimesis.

What made Dr Leavis, after examining them, exclaim (unexpectedly): "How does Dickens know these truths?" Why did Maurice Baring observe that in reading Tolstoy "you find things out as if you had always known them"? Richard Yarrow implies that a 'course' of Poetics will remove - and rightly - our sense of such truths in fiction. He suggests that students in a technological age should be programmed to respond not to what they feel and see but to the way new technologies function.

What is true and what is made up in a fiction of course interact in complex ways, each helping the other. *Gone With the Wind* is a piece of invention about the South and the Civil War, but Scarlett O'Hara is a true character, whose egoism and indifference to her historical situation help to make its sentimental oversimplification more acceptable. The specification for the fiction of *The Turn of the Screw* depends on its removing from the reader any possibility of getting at the 'truth' in the sense of what really happened. But it is full of fascinating truths about the way in which children behave; and these were not at the time familiar truths but newly revealed in the course of a fiction's artifice. One sees what Leavis meant by "How does Dickens know these truths?" and his point has been elaborated by critics like Hirsch and Strickland, who make a distinction between the critical process and the theories of Poetics.

The arts of fiction should enable the reader to recognize its truths. But a novel like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, though a good yarn, is not in any sense 'true' in the sense concerned with this recognition but with its own autonomy. Hardy's 'truth' is in some ways a fantasy figure, like Fowles's Sarah, but Hardy is also concerned to tell truths about her, and he succeeds. Today a novelist's fantasy tends to be accepted as 'truth' just because it is 'fiction' and not because it is 'autonomous' or 'true'.

of *Strangers*, for instance, is a meticulous fantasy which obviously intends to tell us disturbing truths about sex, as Fowles pretended to tell us truths about the Victorians. But in neither work is a balance struck between truth and fiction.

The Turn of the Screw again offers a contrast. James is not a fantasist, and his art admits - as it were inadvertently - a general truth about children while pursuing its predetermined fictional course. The contemporary fantasist generalizes from his own special preoccupation (McEwan's psychopathic couple resemble the Moors Murderers and the victims those in Hawkes's novel *The Lime Twig*) and his art claims an authority it cannot deliver. His characters are not to be believed: their function is to give us a glimpse of the "Pleasure to be extracted from Objects of Terror" which Mrs Barbauld was writing about in 1780.

Such modern fantasies usurp the role of the classic novel but cannot fill it. There is nothing wrong with the genre itself, only with its present pretension. Criticism must place it on a lower level than the art which deals effectively and simultaneously both in truth and in fiction.

JOHN BAYLEY,
St Catherine's College, Oxford.

Andrei Voznesensky

Sir, - Carol Rumens's defence (Letters, December 18) of her account (November 27) of Voznesensky's performance at the Round House against some of my objections (Letters, December 11), reiterates her misgivings about the refrain of "Chagall's Cornflowers". "Man lives by sky alone": "... Voznesensky's definition of the phrase is tedious. The sentiment has a cheap theatricality which suggests that Voznesensky tends, even when making a genuine protest, to say the kind of thing that poets are always expected to say, and it is perhaps for this reason that he is allowed, if under duress, to go on saying it."

This indicates a misunderstanding of how oral verse works, and especially in Russia. The use of variable coda or punchlines is of the essence in protest poetry, and the more so if it is pitched for the kind of reading at which it is being smuggled past snatches of refrains most immediately audible in translation may seem to sound somewhat received, but isn't it a bit much to "judge" and devalue anyone's "craftsmanship and intention" on such fragmented evidence? As well write off Dunbar, Thomas, Dylan or Lennon as tautologous, cheap and hackneyed for the sentiments of "Timor moris conturbat me". "A hard rain's gonna fall" or "Imagine" - instead of paying attention to the overall poetic continuum of which these re-echoing phrases are functional, but utterly inseparable, constituent parts.

So far from being licensed, Voznesensky has consistently been forbidden publication or declamation of "Cornflowers" amongst many poems and more subversive of Soviet prestige and challenging to state security than any of Joseph Brodsky's published poetry in English. This is not to disparage Brodsky but, given the hatred, paranoia and - one hopes - guilt towards Jews sustained by the Soviet *Realpolitik*, it's his Jewishness which is his inalienable threat. And surely Voznesensky's "remaining a Soviet citizen" ought to enlarge, not diminish understanding of what he's doing? It's not that his poetry's animus is so soft that "his elders can afford to be indulgent", as Rumens roundly averred; notwithstanding her letter's disclaimer that "the phrasing of [her] original comments made clear" she was only hypothesizing. It's that his indignity, bravery, impudence and, precisely, "the power of his language" for the most part outwitted the officials, by evoking the same qual-

ities (via re-ricited, *samizdat* and manuscript circulation) on the part of his enormous following.

Rumens questions my grounds for thinking her "more inward" with Brodsky than Voznesensky. Brodsky has been a much extrapolated martyr-hero of the West since his trial in 1964, and has freely collaborated with influential poet-translators, agencies and publishers on both sides of the Atlantic since his exile from the Soviet Union a decade ago. He travels extensively and independently, increasingly giving interviews, reading and writing - in English. Voznesensky, on the other hand, can only manage a broken telephone, and has only been let out to Britain once before, fleeing, as long ago as 1965. He's remained committed to his mother country despite the hoops its administration tried to put him through in between denunciations and deportation orders, from Khrushchev on. And he has rarely been as well served by translators (and public readers of translations) he's been unable to work with directly.

Consequently or not, there can be no doubting Rumens's "outwardness", her detachment from (to use her phrase) imaginative response to Voznesensky. Witness her insistence that we "give an outstanding talent (Brodsky's) its due" when it is dard (Voznesensky's), which is supposedly under discussion. My point about his being "the Russian equivalent" is that at the same time as being Brodsky's equal, at least in his own way, of course, for intelligence, wit and sophistication, another side of Voznesensky's address is to the non-literary tradition: the unbroken mainstream of Russian poetry which keeps "the stern art of poetry" flowing into and out of religious ritual, community celebration and confrontation politics. This doesn't mean its power need be based on a quick sell. Its virtuous projection of activist, passionate and musical language in theatres frequently results in a rich rather than, pace Carol Rumens, "a cheap theatricality". Her method, of evaluations deduced from isolated phrases, is simply ill-equipped to come to terms with this non-linear atmosphere in which the more subtly accessible and purposeful aspects of Voznesensky's originality obtain.

MICHAEL HOROVITZ,
New Departures, Piedmont, Blisley,
Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 7BU.

Robin Hood

Sir, - Referring to J. A. Burrow's review of David Wiles's *The Early Plays of Robin Hood* (January 1), it seems curious that anyone bothers to resurrect a topic which could be said to have been adequately covered many years ago.

Academic interest in the archer-hero has of recent years been directed towards the search for the historical character, if any, behind the legends. After the publication of Dr J. W. Walker's paper, "Robin Hood Identified" in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, XXXVI (1944), the TLS came down in favour of the Wakefield Robin. Joseph Hunter in 1852, Hunter's Rev of literary and historical deduction, though scorned in immoderate terms by the American F. J. Child in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, appeared to be confirmed by Dr Walker's discovery of this Robin Hood's property listed as being confiscated after the Earl of Lancaster's Rebellion in 1322. (Hunter surmised that after the battle of Boroughbridge Robin and his band took refuge in Barnsdale.)

In my *Truth about Robin Hood* (1951, 1978), I showed that several of the characters in a *Lytell Gest* or *Robyn Hode* can be found in the Wakefield court rolls before and after Boroughbridge. Roger of Doncaster, the alleged lover of the prioress of Kirkstall who is said to have conspired to bleed the hero to death; Richard of the Lee, no doubt the prototype of the forlorn knight, Richard-at-the-Tree; the name Willehondes, probably the family name of the one who came to be known as Gilbert with the White Hand, and so on.

All these discoveries of the Wakefield connections have been ignored or dismissed as the vapourings of mere antiquaries or "local enthusiasts". However, Dr J. R. Maddicot of Exeter College, Oxford, "The birth and setting of the ballads of Robin Hood" (*English Historical Review*, xcii, 1978), declares that only the identification of the sheriff of Nottingham in the story will firmly date the *Gest*, and this he proceeds to do. The villain of the ballads is identified as John de Osenford who held the office at various times from March 1334 to 1339 and was finally outlawed. Dr Maddicot identifies the abbot of St Mary's, York, as Thomas de Multon (as did Dr Walker) and the "hye justyce of Englonde" as Sir Geoffrey le Scrope, another Yorkshireman. The chancery and the King's Bench were stationed in York in much of the 1330s and the sheriffs would have to report there. So Dr Maddicot has found that the story, truth or fiction, belongs to the same period as the identified by Joseph Hunter.

Dr Maddicot admits that the sheriffs and justices were common and convicted. One wonders if he has been picked on because Dr Maddicot, being based in Oxford, was able to investigate thoroughly the mind wonders why, if this was the villain who had to traverse Barnsdale to get to York, he was not *not* there instead of in Sherwood Forest.

Richard Barber in *Living Legends* (1981), believes, as do I, that the sheriff was a later addition to the story. Once the tale of "Robin Hood, the Knight and the Monk" (the famous episode of the *Gest*) became popular, other rhymesters stole the characters and adapted old stories or invented new ones around them. The noble fellows of the first story became quite ruthless in other hands, as in "Robin Hood and the Monk" evidently by Nottingham man and "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" by a Yorkshireman. Later, of course, came the stories imitating Robin and the Potter, a pattern copied from stories of kings' encounters in disguise with commoners.

P. VALENTINE HARRIS,
6 Valley Rise, Salisbury Green,
Southampton SO3 6BN.

Blue Plaques

Sir, - E. S. Turner, reviewing *The Blue Plaques Guide to London* by Caroline Dakers (December 23) comments that "Percy Circus [is] now more". It is "in situ", and a plaque is affixed to No 16 where Lenin and his wife Nadia stayed in 1905 for the 3rd Congress of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party.

DAVID E. MUSPRATT,
42 Harvey Goodwin Avenue,
Cambridge CB4 3EU.

'La Ronde'

Sir, - Gabriele Annan (Communicator, January 22) noted two of the published scripts of *La Ronde* but not the Methuen edition of Frank Marcus's translation for BBC Television which we published on January 7 at £2.50 (0 413 49530 2).

DAVID ROSS,
Methuen London Ltd, 11 New
Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE.

To all American readers and subscribers

If you have any difficulties concerning your subscription to or the distribution of the TLS in the United States, please get in touch with Ms Nora Nieg at Times Newspapers of Great Britain Inc, 201 East 42nd Street, New York 10017, telephone (212) 986 9230.

Among this week's contributors

KENNETH BALLHATCHET's most recent book is *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj*, 1980.

RICHARD BROWN is the co-editor of the *James Joyce Broadsheet*.

RICHARD ELLMANN is Goldsmiths' Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford. His books include *Ulysses on the Liffey*, 1972, and his edition of the *Selected Letters of James Joyce* was published in 1975.

EVA ROES's most recent novel is *Waking*, 1980.

J. F. C. HARRISON is Professor of History at the University of Sussex. His books include *Early Victorian Britain*, 1971, and *The Second Coming*, 1979.

ALEXANDER HAYTER's books include *Opium*, and *The Romantic Imagination*, 1968.

ROBERT HAYWARD is the author of *Divine Name and Presence: the Poetics of the Sacred*, 1981.

T. W. HUTCHINSON is the author of *The Philosophy and Politics of Economics*, 1981.

DAVID McLELLAN is Professor of Kent. His *Karl Marx: Interviews and Recollections* was published last year.

J. L. MACKIE, who died last December, was a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and Reader in Philosophy at the University of Oxford. His books include *Truth, Probability and Paradox*, 1973, and *Ethics*, 1977; a new book, *The Miracle of Theism*, will be published later this year.

MICHAEL MASON is a lecturer in English at University College London.

MARY MIDOLSKY is the author of *Beast and Man*, 1980, and *Heart and Mind*, 1981.

GEORGE MIKES's autobiography, *How to Be Seventy*, will be published next week.

EDWIN MORGAN's collections of poems include *Star Gate*, 1979.

KENNETH O. MORGAN's books include *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980*, 1981.

CHRISTOPHER MORRIS's *William Empson and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* was published in 1978.

CRAIG RABIN's most recent collection of poems, *A Free Translation*, was published last year.

D. D. RAFAEL's books include *Islamic Philosophy at the University of Oxford*.

BLAIR WORDEN is a Fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford. He is the author of *The Rump Parliament, 1744*, and editor of Edmund Ludlow's *A Voyage from the Watchtower*, 1978.

F. W. ZIMMERMANN is a lecturer in Islamic Philosophy at the University of Oxford.

BIOGRAPHY

The price of individuation

By Daniel Johnson

RONALD HAYMAN:

K: A Biography of Kafka
349pp. Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
£16.50 (paperback, £8.50).
0 297 77886 6

In Kafka's penultimate story a mysterious beast has constructed a vast underground labyrinth by beating the earth till his brow bleeds. Though the size of the burrow extends the area to be defended from nameless enemies, and thus the anxiety of the narrator, he comforts himself with the tactical advantage of knowing intimately the warren's ramifications: "The robber can very easily become my prey and a sweet-tasting one". The biographer of Kafka is a posthumous scavenger of this kind, who cannot afford to underestimate the slipperiness of the being at the centre of this seething undergrowth of literary invention. Nor can the biographer expect to ravish the inner sanctum without a struggle. Ronald Hayman appears to take the author of this story for a human ostrich, who occupies himself with literature underground, but whose life is somehow exposed, along with all the secrets of the buried head, awaiting the diligent surveyor. Hayman was not looking for a minotaur, nor will the reader find one in his book: rather, a sentimental vegetarian with bad dreams and worse lungs.

The explanation of Hayman's honourable failure lies in his title. Largely to blame for the myth of Kafka the weakling is a crudely autobiographical interpretation of the novels and stories - an interpretation common to all three schools of criticism (religious, psychoanalytical/existentialist, Czech nationalist) which were distinguished by Walter Muschg and refuted by him and by Benjamin, Heller and others many years ago.

What was the essence of Kafka's resilience, and why were anxiety and vulnerability inseparable from it? "Shame", wrote Walter Benjamin, "... is Kafka's most powerful aspect". It is the faculty attributed to the most powerful visages to congeal in the nebula of *The Castle*, the

Kafka's Sancho Panza imprisons his personal devil in the literary character of Don Quixote; if Kafka did share a limited number of experiences with Joseph K., Georg Bendesmann and the rest, that is a reason for *distinguishing* him from them, since he would otherwise never have confronted the reader with so personal and thus hateful a thing as his past. But in any case, "the experience of being Kafka" (to use Hayman's phrase) was literary before it ever reached the page. "More and more fearful as I write ... More than consolation is: You too have weapons."

Even as a boy he wrote, despite adult sneers: his photographs at the age of eleven shows a face of great force and shrewdness. Hannah Arendt rightly draws attention to the tradition among German Jews that the sons who studied (even if, like Kafka, they studied not the law of God's people, but that of the Romans, their oppressors) should not need to earn a living - and to Kafka's bold renunciation of the megalomania of this milieu by taking an ordinary job. One must be grateful to Hayman for reading the voluminous reports Kafka wrote compassionately and well. Not long before he died he found time to comfort a girl in the street who had lost her doll, by writing letters from the toy on its travels. His inexhaustible kindness stemmed from a peculiar mastery of his environment, not the desire to placate it; still less from naïveté. Towards literary windbags he was merciless; he sided not with Karl Rossmann, who admits to knowing nothing of politics, but with the student who replies: "That is a mistake."

What was the essence of Kafka's resilience, and why were anxiety and vulnerability inseparable from it? "Shame", wrote Walter Benjamin, "... is Kafka's most powerful aspect". It is the faculty attributed to the most powerful visages to congeal in the nebula of *The Castle*, the

secretaries' attributed to Bürgel, one of their number. Their shame, we later learn, is especially acute at the hour when, half-conscious and by accident, K. has disturbed them. K. himself feels no shame; he is disturbed by his purposelessness. The women are, as in *The Trial*, shameless, with one exception. Amalia, who was ashamed to answer the loathsome summons from Sortini, is cast into outer darkness with all her family. The delicacy of these officials is turned like the hidden lunar hemisphere perpetually away from the creatures over whom they tyrannize. The animal worlds which Kafka conceives are all ageing and threatened from beyond; the ape has become a man by dint of determination and self-degradation, but by day he must be ashamed of his sub-human female. The narrator of *Investigations of a Dog* belongs to a "lost" but more innocent, more dog-god's generation than his forefathers. In his youthful attempt to render the earth articulate through starvation - perhaps Hayman is right to see a satire here, but that is only one layer of meaning - he is recalled from his bloody puddle of fear and shame by the question: "Don't you understand the self-explanatory?" A "boundless natural way of life" had beckoned unattainably ever since *Description of a Struggle*, though the happy, the shameless, the tormentors of lonely bachelors, are already "dangerous" there. The dog in whom the unhappy consciousness has damned describes himself as "cold, anxious, withdrawn, calculating" - the terms Walter Rathenau, unoriginal as a philosopher but well known to Kafka, used for his *Zweckmensch* ("purpose-man"), the characteristic urban Jew and hence modern by German Jews, modern and hence Jewish by other Germans. And indeed, it was in Kafka's case neither parental nor social influences, nor even anti-Semitism which created an identity he could acknowledge as Jewish, but a certain kind of self-consciousness,

capable also of informing Milena that only his anxiety was lovable, and Robert Klopstock that only by hating would his friend learn to love him.

Max Scheler - whom Kafka was reading in 1917 - produced in 1913 an extraordinary work, posthumously published, which Erich Heller introduced into the Kafka debate: *On Shame and the Feeling of Shame*. The curse of Hofmannsthal's Elektra is, she says, the sacrifice of her veil of shame for her one murderous purpose; and Scheler shows, not merely, as Heller says, that shame is the price of individuation, but that it is the last defence of the individual, that which suspends man (like Kafka's or Zarathustra's trapeze-artists) between god and beast - the counterpart to grace, which, says Kleist, "appears most purely in that human form which either has no consciousness or an infinite consciousness". (How could anyone have expected grace to descend from Kafka's monument to shame, his *Castle*?) The ape man offers an ironical commentary on Scheler's insight, that men hide their joints first to disguise their closest affinity with that primeval world to which, as Benjamin saw, so many of Kafka's beings belong: the former ape repudiates a journalist's charge that by pulling down his trousers he reveals his animal nature: "I, I may take off my trousers before anyone; you will find nothing there but a well-kept coat of fur and the scar of an insolent shot ... Were, however, this writer to take off his trousers before visitors, that would indeed have another aspect and I will grant it as a sign of reason that he does not do so." Scheler shows how an activity like procreation evokes shame only when it assumes a purposeful character; pride and humility, he argues, miraculously mingle in shame. Kafka's language, which is compounded of just these qualities, is also the man; who else could sign a letter, crossing out Franz, F, and

Your: "nothing more, stillness, deep wood?"

"Like a dog!" he said, and it was as if the shame of it should survive him." This last sentence of *The Trial* encapsulates for J. P. Stern the spirit of Nazi law: "The shame ... of being in the wrong because he is alone and weak." But the residue of humanity enshrined in the shame itself is strong enough, in Kafka's eyes, to deserve survival - to deserve it, but not to enjoy it, since shame disembodied would be as unequal to the hypocrisy of the airless court and as Heller says, that shame is the price of individuation, but that it is the last defence of the individual, that which suspends man (like Kafka's or Zarathustra's trapeze-artists) between god and beast - the counterpart to grace, which, says Kleist, "appears most purely in that human form which either has no consciousness or an infinite consciousness". (How could anyone have expected grace to descend from Kafka's monument to shame, his *Castle*?) The ape man offers an ironical commentary on Scheler's insight, that men hide their joints first to disguise their closest affinity with that primeval world to which, as Benjamin saw, so many of Kafka's beings belong: the former ape repudiates a journalist's charge that by pulling down his trousers he reveals his animal nature: "I, I may take off my trousers before anyone; you will find nothing there but a well-kept coat of fur and the scar of an insolent shot ... Were, however, this writer to take off his trousers before visitors, that would indeed have another aspect and I will grant it as a sign of reason that he does not do so." Scheler shows how an activity like procreation evokes shame only when it assumes a purposeful character; pride and humility, he argues, miraculously mingle in shame. Kafka's language, which is compounded of just these qualities, is also the man; who else could sign a letter, crossing out Franz, F, and

Comparative criticism: a yearbook, 3, edited by E. S. Shaffer (330pp. Cambridge University Press, £20, 0 521 23276 7) takes as its theme rhetoric and comparative critical method as applied to the writing of history. Barthes's essay on "The Discourse of History" is here translated for the first time by Stephen Bann, who himself writes on "The historian as taxidermist: Ranke, Barante, Waterston". The volume also includes articles by J. P. Stern on "Literature and Ideology", by Garland Cannon on the correspondence of Sir William Jones, and by Arnaldo Momigliano on Hayden White's tropes.

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The prophet as activist

By David McLellan

ALAN GILBERT:

Marx's Politics
Communists and citizens
327pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
£16.50.
0 85520 441 9

Within the Marxist political tradition, possibly the most debated (and of course never resolved) question is how far Lenin remained faithful to the principles of Marx. Those who have wished to portray Lenin as at least consistent with Marx have usually pointed to the different climates of the Tsarist autocracy and Western Europe as justifying the apparent divergences of Leninist practice. However, Alan Gilbert's strikingly original and detailed work sets out to show that there is really no problem: Marx was a thoroughly-going Leninist *avant la lettre* and those who have tried to open up a gap between Marx and Lenin – or even thought that there was a problem in reconciling their respective attitudes – have simply not read Marx carefully enough.

In giving us a Leninist Marx, Dr Gilbert has chosen his period well. He concentrates on Marx's strategy immediately before and after 1848. If there are similarities with Lenin, they are liable to be found in this period when the socio-political situations facing the two leaders – autocratic monarchy with rising liberal opposition, small proletariat and large peasant mass – were broadly parallel. There are only a few references to Marx's politics after 1852. Thus there is little sustained discussion of interpretations – such as that of Lichtheim – that Marx changed his earlier Jacobin views into something akin to Social Democracy. Indeed, the author promises us a second volume which will "examine *Capital* in the context of Marx's activity in the International Workingmen's Association and in the forma-

tion of the first socialist parties". Thus prospective readers should be warned that the title is misleading: only a specific period of "Marx's politics" is discussed in any detail.

Marx's Politics follows the path of Marx's own political activity between the years 1843 and 1852. It is divided into three sections. In the first, Gilbert traces the influence of the French Revolution and of Charism in the formation of Marx's version of communism as embodied in the Communist League and its *Communist Manifesto*. The second section deals with Marx's attempts to apply his strategy in Germany in 1848 and 1849. The third section discusses how Marx, on his return to England, ordered his ideas in response to the defeat of the revolutionary movement on the Continent.

Gilbert wishes to counterpose his study of Marx's politics to what he considers to be the currently fashionable interpretations of Marx as an economic determinist, a term which he uses widely enough to encompass most previous commentators on Marx. His particular targets are Shlomo Avineri's *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* which, by emphasizing the Hegelian background to Marx's thought, puts more emphasis on evolution than on revolution, and Richard Hunt's *The Political Ideas of Marx and Engels* which explains Marx's changes of tactics by the different constituencies to which he was successively appealing. (It is a pity, however, that he does not mention Maguire's disciplined and nuanced study, *Marx's Theory of Politics*, published in 1978.) As befits the Harvard PhD thesis (submitted in 1974) on which the book is based, the writing is often sharp and intelligent, the command of sources is excellent and good points are established against the adversaries Avineri and Hunt, and the section at the beginning on Marx's debt to the French Revolution is particularly good. But the desire of the author to portray Marx as a proto-Leninist does come up against insuperable difficulties.

First, there is the need to provide some theoretical foundation for the view that Marx pursued a coherent political strategy in 1848-49. To this end, Gilbert interestingly uses the work of Hilary Putnam in the philosophy of science. According to Putnam, scientists never apply a general theory by itself, but always in conjunction with auxiliary statements which enable them to specify the context; and if anomalies occur, then scientists will usually seek for new auxiliary statements to explain them while retaining the given paradigm. Similarly, according to Gilbert, Marx used his general theory of modes of production and class struggle in conjunction with a growing number of auxiliary statements drawn from his practical experience. The difficulty with this view is that political and social theories lack the precision of theories in the natural sciences and so it is not easy to see what auxiliary statements would be excluded on Marx's general theory. The impression from Gilbert's account is that Marx's theory is so all-encompassing that it would accommodate virtually any auxiliary statement or turn of events.

Second, and more specifically, the reading of Marx from a Leninist perspective encounters a difficulty in their respective attitudes to the peasantry. Although Marx did not have the uniformly negative attitude conveyed in David Mitrany's *Marx against the Peasant*, neither did he display the coherent and positive views of Lenin and Mao, as Gilbert would have us believe. An obvious difficulty is the negative view of the peasantry contained in the *Communist Manifesto*. Gilbert tells us that Marx here gave "a conservative albeit still dialectical estimate of peasant political potential. The peasants would play a 'reactionary' role in so far as they tried to roll back the wheel of history." What Marx actually says about the peasantry in the passage referred to is not conditional at all: "They are not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history." Another example of the way

in which Gilbert squeezes his sources further than most would think they warranted is his account of the republican rally at Wrotham in September 1848. Gilbert exaggerates Marx's role in this event as he is clearly hard up for material to back up his view that Marx's main concern at this time was the creation of a worker-peasant alliance. Gilbert tells us that "Marx organized his first Communist rally in Germany among rural peasants in Wrotham". But Marx played only a minor part in organizing the rally and did not attend it in person. Moreover, from the meagre accounts of it which we have it is clear that the participants were more interested in the implications for German nationalism than in the Schleswig-Holstein question than in any "worker-peasant alliance".

More fundamentally still, it is quite unclear that Marx possessed a coherent socialist strategy for Germany in 1848. In spite of Engels's opinion to the contrary, Gilbert insists that Marx and Engels did advocate socialism in Germany in 1848. But he is unable to give any evidence of artisan support for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and it is most striking how, in its first months at least, the paper avoided any mention of working-class demands and stuck rigidly to a radical liberal line. Gilbert rightly draws our attention to the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany* (and reprints them in an appendix to the book), but they were drafted before Marx's return to Cologne and did not figure at all in the pages of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Indeed, Engels reported from Bremen that if single copies of the *Demands* were to be lost there "then everything would be lost for us". Marx was also clearly opposed to the idea of fielding candidates to articulate specifically working-class demands. Gilbert supports his view by supposing a close collaboration between Marx and such artisan leaders as Moll who operated within the worker associations which Marx appeared to avoid as they purveyed with his own policy of a united front of all democratic forces. But

there is no evidence at all of such cooperation and such information does exist suggests that Moll could not have adopted a "worker-peasant" line too far removed from grass-roots radicalism.

It is significant that Gilbert devotes very little space to the apparently fundamental shifts in Marx's strategy: his decision in the spring of 1849 to reject his previous temporizing and throw in his lot with overtly working-class organizations, and his rejection in September 1849 of the idea of permanent revolution. Attention to these shifts would obviously put more emphasis on change than on continuity in Marx's approach. But Gilbert's Marx is very teleological: in his account, Marx rarely simply changes his mind or admits he was mistaken – he is always "advancing" or "going beyond" previous positions. To most observers, Marx seems drastically to have over-estimated the growth of radical working-class consciousness. In one passage where Gilbert discusses the *Capital* of the fetishism of commodities and mentions the obviously retarding effect on the progress of working-class consciousness and organization implied by such a view of the all-pervasive power of the commodity ideology. But it is equally clear that Marx had no full appreciation of this in 1848 and one is left wondering how the analysis of *Capital* could possibly be harmonized with some (though not all) of the tactics of 1848-49. One of the drawbacks of the view Gilbert has organized his work is that he is apt to refer to some of Marx's later views but without going into sufficient detail to demonstrate at least that makes a look forward to the appearance of the second volume of his work to see how he portrays the later Marx as consonant both with the Marx of 1848 and with Leninist principles. We will then have the mirror opposite to Avineri's Marx, the consistent social democrat. But most political thinkers who are also activists are considerably more messy than either portrayal would allow.

POETRY

Masters in modernism

By Clive Wilmer

CHARLES TOMLINSON:

Some Americans
A Personal Record
134pp. University of California Press. \$10.95.
0 520 04037 6

Charles Tomlinson's *Some Americans* is a brief memoir concerning five poets – William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen – and a painter, Georgia O'Keefe. It tells of visits Tomlinson paid to each of them early in his career; pilgrimages, one is tempted to say, for the book is in part an act of homage to six Americans without whose example he could hardly have written as he has. Each of the six, moreover, is firmly set in his or her local habitations: Tomlinson's prose, quite as much as his poetry, is remarkable for its sense of place.

Less than twenty years ago this acknowledgment of American influence might have seemed strange. It had been obvious to Pound and Eliot, after all, that they were to find their way into the main current of European literature they would have to come to England. America was a province. And yet it was they, *arrivistes*, who were to carry the banner of English modernism. Eventually the English literary world adopted Eliot as its own and, with some unease, granted recognition to Pound. It was really not until the early 1960s that the English began to notice virtues in Pound that had nothing to do with Eliot, that were inalienably American and had only borne fruit in the land and dialect Pound had himself forsaken. At about the same time they also became aware of an American poetry, quite independent of British and

far from provincial, that had been developing on its home ground throughout the period of Eliot's exile. Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore were by this time something more than names. The publication of W. C. Williams in the mid-1960s constituted a greater challenge and led to a rush of less durable names, many of whom Tomlinson was active in promoting. Two of these, Oppen and Zukofsky, provide the material for the second of his four chapters.

It was now the turn of the British to feel provincial, and the American tradition spawned a host of imitators in this country. But this reversal of roles was never as simple as it briefly seemed. For one thing, it is doubtful whether the classic generation of American modernists has ever taken root over here; today, English editions of Stevens, Williams and Moore are all out of print or hard to come by. For another, the British poets most deeply affected – Tomlinson, David, Gunn and J. H. Prynne were not of a kind to renounce their native traditions. Indeed, a letter from Williams praising Tomlinson's poetry for its "generosity towards the American idiom" seems to have caused the latter some disquiet. It was an oddly insensitive compliment, coming from a man who valued the organic relation of language to place, and it raises an interesting question: why should the heir to a major tradition imitate poets who had learned their English – as Williams proudly insisted – "from the mouths of Polish mothers"? Part of the answer must be that *intime* is precisely what the better English poets did not do. In spite of some colourless attempts at Williams's "three-ply line", most of Tomlinson's work draws its lifeblood from a native lineage that connects Wordsworth, Coleridge, Ruskin and Hopkins: a tradition of "natural poetry" that, in Tomlinson's judgment, had become closely interwoven with a cognate tradition of American art.

typified by Williams and his Objectivist followers. "Natural poetry" seems the suitably Wordsworthian phrase but it needs qualification, not least because the American tradition is by now essentially urban in sensibility. Moreover, the poetry is no longer felt to have transcendental implications but expresses itself as a respect for particulars, for the otherness of things. It involves a recognition that the world is simply not available to language. It is not to be acquired by human speech. Therefore the language tends to be edged and dry, cleansed of private obsession. The paradox of much American poetry, as readers of much American poetry have often noticed, is that in endeavouring to render particularly – and necessarily failing to do so – the poets have had to turn their attention towards the language itself. The case for doing so might be represented by George Oppen. The very focus of Oppen's work is the space between language and the world. In 1962, Tomlinson recalls, Oppen's second collection, *The Materials*, was one of a stack of books he had been asked to review. Depressed by the quality of the other books, he opened it without enthusiasm but, almost at once, "the weight lifted". Here are the first lines he must have read:

The men talking
Near the room's center. They have said
More than they had intended
Pinning it to the apron
Of the living room
An assault
On the quiet continent
Beyond the window
Fish and rock and hunger
Loose in the night sky
Hardened into soil
Those are the opening lines of "Eclogue", a poem concerned, as the title suggests, with nature (that is to

say, "the given world") and with human conversation. The ambiguous syntax of the poem and the visual space that punctuates its form are the window-frame beyond which, removed and inviolate, "the quiet continent" has its being. Language (Oppen seems to be saying) could not exist without the world, though the world would exist if language had never been; nevertheless, the world would have no existence for the speaking animal if it were not for the assaults his language makes upon it.

And yet, the British reader might reasonably reply, the culture which produced Hardy and Hopkins need feel no shame or inferiority in this matter of language respecting the intractable particular. The difference between the two traditions is more deeply embedded in national history. Oppen's "continent", a word used with all its connotations, may provide the clue if we first take it at face value. Instinctively Oppen thinks of his language and identity as drawing their character not from a small region (such as Dorset, or even England) but from America itself. The language of American poetry belongs to the old world but long ago had to address itself to the changes of the new, to a wilderness untouched by history or human association. This dialogue with the frontier is what distinguishes American writing. It was what Pound saw reflected in early European literature – the freshness of the Troubadours and the *dolce stil nuovo* – and sought to recover for the English of his day. Stevens, too, for all his viceroy of elegance, was preoccupied with wilderness: how meaning and music are to be derived from it and, more, how once achieved they may recreate it in the reader's imagination. The whole sense of the unmediated object that one finds in Williams and Moore is the product of a culture that has erected its stockade on the edge of the unknown.

Thus the opposition of language to reality is more intense than it could ever be in Europe. Language is, in effect, the poet's material – as removed from its object as a sculptor's stone from the flesh he seeks to imitate. But this kind of attention to language is not without its dangers, for example the sterile pedantry of Pound in *Logic of Language*. In his work, particularly of speech descending into wild eccentricity. It is baffling to find Tomlinson recommending lines like these:

Hear, hear
Cluck
Mirror,
Care
His error.
In her
Care
Is clear

This is poetry written to a formula, and its inadequacy may remind us of Tomlinson's own poetry. His account of American poetry is far from being the whole story. It is not merely that the British reader is accustomed to great poetry that is innocent of its means. It is also that there is much good poetry which, far from being fresh, derives its beauty and moral force from the well-used collocation of poetic diction.

It must also be said that Tomlinson's taste and sensibility are deeply Puritanical. He is therefore able to endorse – wholeheartedly, though not without humour – Moore's old-fashioned insistence on "seemliness" in poetry and to recognize that word as representing the "kind of probity" he had early sought in his own work and found awaiting him in Pound and Stevens. American art is to a large extent the expression of a Puritan culture, but there is always an element in it whose character is determined by opposition to Puritanism. Tomlinson acknowledges its existence when he contrasts the vision of Georgia O'Keefe ("a separating vision giving her space in which to contemplate the thing before her") with the "unitive" vision of the pantheist ("the oceanic engulfment of Jackson Pollock"). But when he detects in Jackson Pollock's "redundant" "Amadeus" yearning for purgatorial unity to be achieved "by a surrender of the self in a communion with impersonal

forces". Such a surrender "must involve not just the death of self, but the death of that sense of individual responsibility which conscience bids us never to violate even for the most obsessive idea or the most spiritual ideal". This is Puritanism at its best, and I should be happy to embrace it were it not for the fact that it rules out of court both the mysticism of Pollock on the one hand and the neo-classicism of Ivor Winters on the other.

Winters deserves mention here because he was a friend of Crane's who judged Crane's work in terms strikingly similar to Tomlinson's. In spite of a brief but sympathetic portrait of Winters, Tomlinson fails to mention this fact. He might also have made some reference to Winters's poem "The Slow Pacific Swell" – an antidote to the oceanic vision if ever there was one – when he observes how his "own preferred American poems have been seapieces" which "seemed to propose a moral term where you could not confront nature". For the American imagination, as Winters's poem recognizes, only the sea can compete with the inhuman scale of the native wilderness. Only the sea can be symbolically charged with the significance of nature untouched by man, existing apart from him and welcoming him only with the promise of death. This is not exactly alien to the English imagination but it implies an utterly different experience of the world, one which the English may now be ready to learn from.

The Issues I have touched on here are only raised or alluded to *en passant* in *Some Americans*. It is first and foremost a relaxed and genial enterprise, in which an important poet discharges a debt of honour to his masters and invites the reader to share in the pleasures of memory. Much of the book's appeal lies in incidental descriptions of the places Tomlinson's pilgrimages led him to: Brooklyn, smalltown New Jersey, the New Mexico desert and, in the last chapter, Italy, the adopted home of Ezra Pound. The individual portraits, too, are well-rounded and good-humoured.

The London Borough of Camden's Festival of Contemporary Poetry opens today at 7.30 pm at Keats House with a reading by Basil Bunting and continues with readings every Friday and Saturday evening there until 27 February; some of the other poets taking part are Ryszard Krynicki and Ewa Lipska from Poland, Thomas Brasch, Bernd Lenzsch and Kurt Bartsch from West Germany, Minoru Nakamura from Japan, André du Bouchet from France, and W. S. Graham.

David Gascoyne: on his sixty-fifth birthday (34pp. Enitharmon Press, 22 Huntingdon Road, East Finchley, London N2 9DU, in association with Amersand Press. £3. 0. 904289 18 8) was published in October in a limited edition of 350. The booklet contains poems mostly written especially for the occasion, by Abdullah al-Udhari, Keith Bosley, Richard Burns, Joseph Chifari, Leonard Clark, Jérôme Gracien, Mick Gowan, Michael Hamburger, John Heathcote, Adrian Henri, Phoebe Hearsh, Jeremy Hooker, Frances Horowitz, Michael Horvitz, Edward Mycure, Kathleen Raine, Jeremy Reed, Stephen Roper, Geoffrey Thurlay and David Wright. It also contains prose tributes from Anthony Rudolf, Pamela Chandler, Lawrence Fixel, Derek Stanford, and a poem "after Friedrich Hölderlin" translated by David Gascoyne.

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Judging and spectating

By D. D. Raphael

KNUD HAAKONSEN:

The Science of a Legislator:
The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith
240pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23891 9

Knud Haakonsen has lost no time in making use of the new material on Adam Smith which has been published in the past few years. His book is primarily a study of Smith's account of jurisprudence but this naturally extends to Smith's views on the history of society and on the concept of justice in relation to ethics and politics. Since Dr Haakonsen believes that the influence of David Hume on Adam Smith was especially marked in the field of theoretical jurisprudence, he prefaces his study of Smith's ideas with a substantial chapter on Hume's theory of justice.

For the major part of his book Haakonsen has drawn extensively upon the volume, in the Glasgow edition of Smith's works which prints two reports of the *Lectures on Jurisprudence*. A certain amount of the material in the *Lectures* was embodied in the *Wealth of Nations*, and Haakonsen makes good use of that book too. In addition, he compares, when possible, the reports of the jurisprudence lectures with some brief notes of them taken or copied at an earlier stage by one of Smith's Glasgow colleagues, John Anderson. Haakonsen has made himself equal to well acquainted with Smith's other works, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The History of the Progress of the Sciences and Arts*, and in particular with his moral theory and in particular his theory of justice.

ticular for his more theoretical ideas about justice.

The final result of Haakonsen's investigation is not a coherent whole. The fault lies in his materials, not in what he has done with them. Hume had a firm, well-worked-out, theory of justice, which Haakonsen presents to us in a clear fashion and with some originality of interpretation. Smith too had a theory of justice, but nothing like so carefully or fully worked-out. I think he hoped to clarify it through his investigation of the history of law. He usually reached his theoretical ideas after beginning with historical inquiries. As late as 1785 he wrote of still being engaged on "a theory and history of law and government", but his manuscript for this enterprise, along with others, was destroyed by his executors at his urgent request.

The books that Smith himself saw through the press retained a great deal of what had previously formed the content of lectures, so one is apt to suppose that his lectures on jurisprudence give us the gist of what his book on the subject would have said. But so far as the *theory* of jurisprudence goes, they are in a rough state and represent only an early stage of his thinking. Even at the end of his life, he may not have made all that much progress with the theory, but he achieved far below his hopes. So it is unrealistic to put the *Lectures on Jurisprudence* alongside his *Wealth of Nations*. Haakonsen's well aware of this and does not try to do more than his source materials warrant. However, it explains why his book lacks coherence.

Haakonsen has in fact tried as far as he can to look for systematization.

He relates the impartial spectator of Smith's ethical theory to the function of a judge in a court of law; and he argues that the doctrine of unintended consequences in economics (the "invisible hand") can be found in Hume's theory of justice and is carried over by Smith to the understanding of natural law generally. In these interpretations Haakonsen shows originality and insight. He sometimes exaggerates the suggested connection between the theory of the impartial spectator and the doctrine of the jurisprudence lectures, but the basic idea is sound: Smith did after all write, in the *Moral Sentiments*, of conscience (the impartial spectator) and of actual spectators as being made the "judge of mankind" and "having the jurisdiction" of "tribunals".

On Smith's view of natural law, Smith's view of the history of law

Haakonsen is again perceptive. At a first reading the *Moral Sentiments* gives the impression of inconsistency: Smith starts off in the scientific spirit of empiricism, ready to explain moral concepts in terms of human psychology; but then he appears to take a leap back into traditional theological doctrine with talk of moral rules as laws of God. More careful attention to the text, however, shows that Smith remains an empiricist throughout and in fact reaches a subtle psychology and sociology. Haakonsen sees this very well. Smith's theology, he says, is "really proposing a theory of human nature" and "a completely naturalistic theory of religious belief which is part and parcel of his explanation of the moral sentiments".

If Haakonsen is strong on giving us an overall view of theories, he can sometimes be weak on detailed points of interpretation. In the Hume chapter there are two or three surprising instances of loose thought. However, he himself corrects loose thought. In others, when he shows that Smith's history of society is not strictly a "materialist" or "economic" theory of history because it does not treat economic factors as the sole determinant of social change. All this is a valuable contribution to Adam Smith studies.

Constitutional Development in the USSR (310pp. Methuen. £12.50. 0 416 71680 6) by Aryeh L. Ungar examines the political institutions and processes of the Soviet state in the context of the four constitutions (1918, 1924, 1936 and 1977) which are given in full, with a list of all substantive amendments. Ungar provides introductory commentaries to each constitution which analyse its provisions in relation to actual political and legal practice.

Dido

The day opens, bland
and milky-blue. A woman
is looking out at a rain-washed garden.
In her thought a wooden flute and
spice trees, and the sun
flashing off the bracelet at her wrist.
She is no longer waiting for something to happen.

Her quiet face observes
the evidence of an order
older than Greece, in whose projection
the courtyard holds the trees, and
all her memories stir as gently
as leaves that flicker on the wall below her:

A stranger already knocks at the gate of the palace.

Elaine Feinstein

By Hugo Williams

HENRY CHAPIN:

The Haunt of Time
Chosen Poems, Old and New
144pp. Dublin, New Hampshire:
William L. Bauhan. \$6.95.
0 87233 056 7

The first poems in *The Haunt of Time* were published in the *London Mercury* in 1924, the most recent in *The Sound* in 1980. But the book is not the sweeping chronicle of the mid-century it appears to be. Rather, it is a sparing selection from mostly recent work: Chapin was born in 1893 and grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, where his Huguenot forebears settled in the 1600s. He was a boyhood friend of Scott Fitzgerald and graduated from Princeton the same year. He probably knew Fitzgerald in Europe, since he spent the next few years in France and England, publishing poems in magazines alongside Yeats, Sassoon and Massfield from whom he seems to have learnt something, as the extracts here from his two long poems of Western migration suggest. Returning to America, he took up farming and local politics in Pennsylvania, and for the next two decades published little apart from these epics. The better-known of these is *The Adventures of Johnny Appleseed*, though it is hard to tell, from the "new" titles provided, whether any of it is reprinted here. It was not until 1960, when he returned to New England and full-time writing, that his first collection of poems was published. This has been followed by an astonishing nine volumes in subsequent years.

The Haunt of Time is curiously organized. With such a long life's work it might have been instructive if the poems had been presented in chronological order, or dated; instead, the early "New England Sentiment" of the 1920s appears within a few pages of "Li Po Comes Home", one of the more recent.

A cool breath falls from the mountain.
Li Po opens his robe of fur.
Smiling the aldes in
Li Po dismisses the moon.

Li is one of the components of a healthy life for Chapin, but the New Englander cannot help waggling a finger. "Be sure the shimmering face and form / are not mistook for love." (As if one could ever be sure of that, or want to be!) The roots of all Chapin's work are plainly in his native State; the sea and the pioneering spirit are his lifelong obsessions. Frost is the shining model (his material overlaps with Frost's), and the influence of Pound is also felt, though Chapin does not share Pound's late-flowering creativity seems to have driven him to return to his childhood home with his second wife, Paula Van Dyke, who was tragically drowned there not long afterwards.

The erratic, gentle bells at harbour mouth
answer each other as they always have,
making the last sound you could have heard
when the sea you loved took your final breath.

In this moving elegy, "I Beg To Report", which is spoken directly to his dead wife, the highly personal material of household memories and deep feeling for once thrusts Chapin's conventional discursiveness to one side, forming a natural style in which fondness and grief find perfect balance. As he says elsewhere: "Joy is the gift of courage." Sometimes, too, Chapin has a felicitous trick of implying his faith in a living God by casually personalizing nature:

No fault of mine, white Gomer decks
or silvery dew refreshes (read ward)
Someone set it going: wound up small
to loop the air

But despite his long narrative efforts and broad Whitmanesque gestures, the overall effect of Chapin's selected poems is that of an occasional, if not amateur approach to poetry. This is as it should be.

perhaps a life of action throwing up its reflective passages. But Chapin's work is so detached from the innovations of the last half-century, the contractions and ellipses, cuts and jumps as to seem unwelcome in the provincial explicitness over which the eye skims too rapidly, having been there before. Admirable homely sentiments on marriage and friendship are spelt out for fireside consumption: "Love and comradeship are vagrant gifts / that must be tended with a constant hand." There is much received wisdom here, but why not? It's just that we have grown used to a more drastic wedding of the poet with his language and sources than Chapin ever attempts. He may tell it like it is, but he seems unaware of the fact that others of his generation have been showing it for years.

My heart was great with awe
when slow pacing at the fall of night
I stood in the golden light
filled with the gathering might
of the mountain, and saw
eternity as in a dream

Chapin is an American line which skirts the whole modernist movement, rather as our own does, but in the opposite direction. His future is the past and he faces it squarely: "Backs turned from bigotry / they came to dwell by the blue hills / east of the river Connecticut / the prayerful pioneers, as clear men studying plainness / who were not too curious / of the human mysteries / nor yet purchasers of grace." Oh, fortunate, "It is an art which may yet, I suppose, find immortality in the homes of the Moral Majority. I admit to an aesthete's awe for those nearly Protestant bell-bellies even today on the devastation of the planet to the greater glory of God. Irony is the joke we share with God / crying: Father, how dothly / you pull out the rug." But although that is neat enough, the book is on the other foot by now. I should have thought, in Josephine Jacobson's ambiguous phrase in her introduction, "Harry Chapin is incurably American."

the fields of science. The relation of reason and moral value to imagination, however, is not completely clarified. Perhaps it was easier for Gerard to give intuitive reason to imagination because he was already an intuitionist. For others it would not be so easy.

From the outset in Wolff and Baumgarten, the German approach to imagination was more systematic than the British, and this tendency was reinforced as it became a central issue in the critical philosophy. The Leibnizian tradition also played a large role in German criticism. The imagination "works through poetry to present a sensuous imitation of the transcendental and spiritual worlds in general", summarizes Engell. "This produces a 'higher' aesthetic that goes beyond visible nature and comes face to face with the forces and essences of nature." Imagination unlocks the treasures of the Indic, Egyptian, Greek and Nordic mythologies, interprets folk cultures, and grasps the truth behind the symbol-laden language of the Bible. And it could create a new mythology. In 1793, Karl Philipp Moritz wrote that imagination seeks to render higher essences "as individualized as possible"; it transfers spiritual powers to "beings now represented as actual and to these are attributed the birth, names, genealogy, and form of men".

Engell finds pivotal the writings of Johann Nicolaus Tetens, who exerted a potent influence on Kant and Coleridge. For Tetens the imagination had three distinct levels: direct perception; representation of images, like the memory, but with the capacity to alter them; and *Dichtkraft*, which, according to Tetens, "dissolves and blends images, separates and draws them together, and creates new forms and appearances". Even the slightest imagination seems to drop on its way into a place in the finished whole. Tetens was concerned with the question of the will, which he solved by a kind of paradox. A genius wills the formation of his work yet he feels himself in the grip of some immense controlling power, part of the Will of another, as Coleridge would write. How did this super-totality otherwise come into existence? The artist cannot fully understand the process because conscious powers are only a part of it. But it feels like an irresistible passion and nothing is stronger than the will. Thus, deliberate planning forces of one's being. What and where were these unconscious powers? In man alone, or in nature too, and God? Was there a vantage point from which to view and judge of the rules governing the whole? For, after the organized artistic fact, there did seem to be rules. The search was on for a larger philosophy to explain the operation of these powers.

If there were rules for genius, Kant said, we would all be geniuses. His many contributions to imagination extended over forty-five years. The general trend of his thinking was to grant more and more to it, combining the findings of the British empirical philosophers with the transcendental motives of Leibniz and his followers. Engell likens this effort to building a tunnel through a granite mountain.

from the side of the categories and the postulated *Ding-an-Sich*, the side of formal intuition; the transcendental and a priori rules of time and space; the productive imagination starts to head into the mountain, destined to reach the other side of phenomena and experience. Meanwhile, from the empirical side, the reproductive imagination sets out in the opposite direction, struggling to cut through to the goal of understanding.

"At times," Kant believed that imagination could coordinate this effort. In the *Opus postumum* he gave to artistic genius the power of *Gefühl* itself, the principle of animation of upward movement through ideas.

After Kant, ideas on imagination spread out like fire. Not a year passed in the 1790s without an important book or essay on the subject. Schiller said, "Imagination was the wings which carried us to a higher state. For Blake and Schelling it was the *vaude-mecum* of religious sublimation. In the *Letters on the Advancement of Humanity* Herder identified the "humanitätsideal" innate in mankind; poets and artists nourished its realization. The imagination was no longer just a faculty or power. It was a way of life.

But this is only half the story. Chapters on Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Goethe and Keats tell how the creative imagination figures in their efforts to fulfil the very ideals it set for them. The book concludes with Coleridge's attempt to synthesize his *Dynamical Philosophy* with the Trinity; more on this subject will emerge when Engell publishes his edition of the *Biographia Literaria* (with W. J. Bate) later this year.

The relation of eighteenth-century criticism on imagination to the Romantic achievement prompts several reflections. First, the critics opened the way for Romanticism. They accomplished this end by arguing themselves forward, out of corners, dead-ends and eddies across a century. The very object of their endeavour was their inspiration, and their curiosity was matched by intellectual courage. How they did this, what fostered and hindered them, so admirably chronicled here, amounts to a moral lesson for criticism at any time: by their fruits shall ye know them.

Second, one notes the manner in which they translated concepts of imagination into other dimensions. Psychologically, the imagination reconciles diverse powers and faculties (Gerard, Tetens, Priestley). Religiously, this reconciling power was linked to a "Mittelpunkt" (Herder, Coleridge) symbolizing the creative force of Christ who united God, man, and nature; or a visionary moment. In and out of time, where past and future were gathered up (Wordsworth). Philosophically, it was a "Mittelpunkt" (Schiller) or "Indifferenzpunkt" (Schelling) between poles of contrary forces. Aesthetically, it was "the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one" (Coleridge). The idea cut across many fields. Herder's and Schelling's positions now seem more remote, one can still reach a true understanding of them by starting out on the appropriate parallel corridor.

Finally, when Seltzer said that imagination, not memory, was the mother of the fine arts, he did not mean to cut off the past by a simple notion of originality. The major Romantics supported this position. One of the chief uses of imagination had always been to connect, to translate, to synthesize. One could not connect what one had cast aside.

Transindividually speaking

By Christopher Norris

MARY EVANS:
Lucien Goldmann
An introduction
165pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95.
0 7108 0067 3

This book opens with a modest disclaimer: "a brief introduction... not an intellectual biography" and will certainly not be accused of exceeding its brief. In such a short span it can do little more than summarize Lucien Goldmann's ideas, sketch in the outline of an intellectual background (notably the influence of Lukács), and gesture towards some of the problems encountered in his work. Mary Evans's book is unlikely to create any new stir of interest among readers not yet familiar with Goldmann's writing. As an "introduction" it lacks the communicative flair and enthusiasm needed to win converts. On the other hand it spends too much time on dogged exposition to spark off any fresh or productive line of debate. Ironically, its one good effect may be to revive dim memories of Goldmann's achievement among those who responded to his work before his premature death in 1970 (along with the subsequent vagaries of structuralist fashion) cut short his growing reputation.

It is a negative virtue of Evans's approach that she largely ignores the hothouse climate of literary theory which has tended to pass Goldmann by as a "primitive" structuralist hopelessly captive to his own conceptual metaphors. Deconstruction has given rise to a deep suspicion of any methodology, like Goldmann's, which clings to "structure" as something more than a shifting and provisional figure of thought. Adepts like Barthes abandoned the quest for a structuralist "science" of the text, and took to treating their own early work as a dalliance with methods which could only fetter or stifle the vertiginous pleasures of reading. Goldmann's brand of genetic structuralism seems to belong to that stiff, theoretical regime, a model which set up the social unconscious (or "transindividual subject") as a uniform means of explanation.

Marxist critics were equally at odds with Goldmann's working assumptions. From an Althusserian standpoint his approach has been stigmatized as insufficiently dialectical, as lacking a due sense of complex mediation; and ultimately pointing to

an "ahistorical" plenitude of lived experience. Goldmann's defenders have mostly been critics of a strongly empirical or sociological bent, willing to bypass such queasy issues of theory. The most notable exception, Raymond Williams, has looked to him mainly as a moderating voice against the rigours and militant anti-humanism of Marxist thinking in the past decade.

With the waning of Althusser's influence it may be that Goldmann — like his mentor Lukács — is due for reassessment. Whatever its theoretical shortcomings, *The Hidden God* was a striking and persuasive work which did much to justify the extension of structuralist methods to complex regions of historical and cultural understanding. Goldmann no doubt suffered from the kind of boiled-down critical treatment which heralded the arrival of "structuralism" in the late 1960s. Going back to his work one is struck not only by the breadth of historical research but by the scrupulous deployment of theory in the service of detailed interpretation. Certainly there is a danger of excessive schematization in the series of homologies which Goldmann detects between Jansenist religion, social displacement (the *noblesse de robe*) and the writings of Racine and Pascal. But it is a danger which Goldmann was fully aware of, and which he managed to avoid — in this book at least — by sensitive regard for the checks and resistances put up by his material.

More telling is the criticism that Goldmann's method works as well as it does in *The Hidden God* only by virtue of a curious kinship, or elective affinity, between topic and treatment. The *deus absconditus* of Jansenist theology might well be seen as an analogue — indeed an unconscious projection — of the structuralist emphasis on lost origins and meanings deferred by the endless play of signification. As with Derrida's critique of the "transcendental signified" in Western philosophy, the gesture of denial seems always and inescapably fixated on the very illusion which it seeks to dispel. All theories of course have their temperamental home-ground, and Goldmann's readings are by no means invalidated by this sense of an exceptional "fit" between theme and theory.

But his methods are much less convincing when he moves outside the socio-cultural ambience of seventeenth-century France and applies them (for instance) to Kantian philosophy or the *nouveau roman*. Goldmann reads Kant as a "tragic"

philosopher, one in whom a dialectic of enlightenment (striving for the unity of subject and object, thought and action) is forced into paradox and unfulfilment by the backward political condition of German society. This view of dialectics as presenting a special, historical kinship with original and suggestive of Goldmann's ideas. At the same time it invites the charge (from Marxists and more orthodox Kantians alike) that Goldmann has taken the world-view of a different time and place, and transposed it as if "tragic" awareness were a timeless, inherent condition of all such attempts to negotiate the problem of knowledge. Kant becomes, with Pascal and Racine, a protagonist in the same long drama of thwarted aspirations.

Mary Evans finds relatively little to criticize in Goldmann's work on Kant, though she does bring out the limitations of his writing on Mallarmé and later French fiction. In general her book is not so much concerned with interpretative problems in Goldmann's work as with tracing its political development (mainly by reference to Lukács) and explaining the causes of his later quarrel with non-orthodox forms of Marxism. She has some useful things to say about Goldmann's increasing hostility towards Soviet communism, his estrangement from Marxist-revolutionary themes and his espousal of the view that change could only come about within the areas of free technological society. Her criticisms here are sharply focused and argued on firm historical and sociological grounds. All the more evident by contrast is her tendency simply to repeat and paraphrase Goldmann's own arguments, reserving her critique for the generalized discussion of his later political views. Evans says clearly enough the problems raised by Goldmann's loose distinction between a "repressive" stage of monopoly capitalism and an "acceptable" market economy, the latter somehow promoting freedom and emancipated consciousness. It is unfortunate that her analysis of Goldmann's critical writing is nowhere conducted at the same level of clarity and vigour.

The book has more than its share of misprints, solecisms and grammatical lapses, along with such painful contortions as "the possibility of the possible disappearance of a specifically proletarian culture". At least in appearance is a welcome indication that Goldmann's work is back on the agenda for serious discussion.

The family philosophy

By Christopher Thorne

R. F. HOLLAND:
Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance
300pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 27295 1

What is the essence of the Commonwealth? What principles and purposes are attached to it? How did it come to develop out of Britain's Empire, and in what direction is it evolving still? The vigorous answers to such questions recently supplied by Mr Muldoon, when he was responding to charges levelled against New Zealand over the South African rugby tour, serve as a reminder that, whatever else it may or may not be, the Commonwealth relationship remains a rich topic for debate and disagreement. Gibbon, one feels, would have enjoyed composing a few inimitable footnotes on the subject, not least concerning the myths which it has tended to become textbooks have depicted the development of the Commonwealth in the years before the Second World War as a natural and harmonious process. The Dominions, so such versions run, had their childhood solemnly recognized in the Balfour Report of 1926 and by the Statute of Westminster of 1931, thereafter (with the exception of the Irish Free State and some reluctance on the part of Hertzog's South Africa) advancing shoulder-to-shoulder with Britain towards the trial of strength with Germany, Italy and Japan. Its commercial ties strengthened as a result of the 1932 Ottawa Conference, its awareness of its own unique character made keen by the wisdom of Smuts, the "family" represented the planned fulfilment of Britain's philosophy of empire.

Comfortable images and assumptions of this kind were to contribute in the post-1945 period to the belief that the Commonwealth could provide the foreign policies of Britain, though now dwarfed by the United States and the Soviet Union, could retain their position as a Great Power; that the Commonwealth constituted one of the "three circles" within which Britain's international policies were to be formulated. And yet, concealed from the general gaze in Britain itself by the renewed contribution of the Dominions on the field of battle, Commonwealth relations during the war years had been subject to considerable strain. For those who cared to see it, the issues raised between 1939 and 1945 were such as to call in question both the association's future strength on the international scene, and the more comfortable and romantic versions of its pre-war history. The need for protection from Japan's advance in 1942 emphasized the hollow nature of Britain's assurances, repeated as late as 1939, that the Royal Navy could and would do the job; it also pointed ahead towards the ANZUS Pact of 1951, the absence of Britain from which was so to anger Churchill. Or again, the increasing likelihood that independence would have to be granted to India soon after the war raised an even more significant question: how the Commonwealth would fare if and when it lost its existing character as a fraternity of white peoples in a white-dominated world.

A realistic examination of inter-war Commonwealth relations, then, is a prerequisite for any appreciation of what was to follow, while it can also contribute to an understanding of Britain's troubled experiences on an international level after 1918. R. F. Holland's study is helpful in this regard. Originally a doctoral thesis, it puts its themes across clearly, and the author has a happy knack of coming up with a nicely turned sentence when summing up a particular aspect of his subject. Thus, of the Dominions' Office around 1930 he observes that it had "become the prisoner of a revolving conundrum whereby Dominion nationalism was always appeased in order to facilitate cooperation, whilst cooperative initiatives were always rejected for fear of stimulating Dominion nationalism".

Dr Holland begins with the promise that it was only in the mid-1920s, "when Britain's post-1918 problems became clear", and "the mass phenomena of Empire" (exhibitions, days of celebration, and the like) manifested themselves, that "a Commonwealth 'system' came to exist". One could argue over certain elements contained within this assertion, and some readers may be puzzled to read a little further on that "there was not a Commonwealth system any more than there was an international system". (Holland's meaning is that the "system" existed only as a political concept, not in reality.) The ensuing argument, however, is a convincing one: that the Commonwealth dimension appeared to provide inter-war Britain with one means of halting her relative decline, internationally speaking, and that the arguments which surrounded the association, both among its constituent governments and within Whitehall, need to be seen in that light. Put in the simplest terms, what this meant was that, whereas for various reasons individual Dominions were reluctant to bind themselves in such a way as to become involved in a renewed European war, those responsible for Britain's foreign policies were bent on ensuring that, if such a war should come, Dominions assistance could be relied upon. Concessions might have to be made to Dominion susceptibilities in other spheres, but not in this matter of Britain's international position and, possibly, very survival.

This central concern for Britain's power and security was shared by Leopold Amery. In the tradition of Milner, however, he went much further than most politicians and officials in London in his crusading vision of what could be achieved on a Commonwealth basis, and in his attempts (not least as a means of outflanking the Foreign Office) to bring the Dominions into the British policy-making process. The establishment of a separate Dominions Office was a step in this last direction. More significant still was the success of Amery and others in bringing to the fore the possibility of adopting some form of Commonwealth trade strategy as a means of restoring Britain's prosperity and preserving her room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis those more blessed with raw materials and a large domestic market.

Amery's vision was incapable of being realized. Not for the last time, he argued his case with great persistence and at great length, but on the basis of equally great misconceptions. (In 1944-45, when Keynes was striving to bring home to ministers and officials the magnitude of the country's financial vulnerability, Amery was convinced that as a result of the huge sterling balances which other countries had piled up, the pound sterling would be widely cherished, and that hence Britain possessed "an almost unlimited gold mine in its [Treasury] printing presses".) There were, obviously, sufficient common sentiments and perceived common interests among Commonwealth states to give their association continued meaning. And, on the negative side, Holland brings out, for example, the anti-American element that was involved. In the final reckoning, however, certain prominent features of the inter-war international scene, together with the politicization of Commonwealth issues within Britain and the Dominions, set severe limits to what the association could achieve as a distinct entity in world affairs.

Within each of the member states, a variety of considerations worked against any absolute commitment to Commonwealth solidarity. In London, for example, as Holland demonstrates throughout the book, the priority given by the Foreign Office to international developments in Europe, together with its desire not to be encumbered in its dealings with others with the separate preoccupations of the Dominions, frequently brought it to oppose the submissions of the Dominions' Office, more concerned for Commonwealth feelings.

Nor, for the most part, did British politicians and officials appreciate the particular regional interests and ambitions that were developing in Canberra and other Dominion capitals, as there existed among all Commonwealth members what Holland terms "a remarkable ignorance of and insensitivity towards each other".

Misunderstandings and difficulties of this kind could no doubt have been reduced, at least, by the governments and peoples concerned. But other obstacles to the development of a closely-knit Commonwealth "system" were beyond any such control, being woven into the fabric of the current international political, economic and strategic scene. Faced with the continuing possibility of a renewed conflict within Europe, her worldwide interests far exceeding her means of upholding them, Britain could no more base her policies on Commonwealth considerations alone than she could concentrate exclusively on upholding the League of Nations. Nor, despite her assurances to the contrary, was she in a position to protect Australia and New Zealand should she be faced simultaneously with major assaults in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Far East. In such circumstances, what Holland calls "an essentially 'political' view of the Commonwealth" began to emerge in London. "Increasingly", he adds, "Commonwealth was not perceived as an absolute 'yes' worth preserving at almost any price, but a political relationship the utility of which depended on the terms of its operation. It was, in short, negotiable." When Britain did act in a way which accorded with the preferences of a majority of the Dominions, as over Czechoslovakia in 1938, she did so because she saw her own interests as thus being served, not as a concession to Commonwealth pressures.

Meanwhile, international realities had likewise nullified Amery's hope that, on the basis of the diverse but complementary economic roles of its members, the Commonwealth could become a closely-knit and largely self-sufficient commercial and financial unit. In the event, and especially after 1929, the terms and patterns of world trade were such that the interests of primary producers like Australia and Canada were far more

Far from shipshape

By Bryan Ranft

ALAN EREIRA:
The Invergordon Mutiny
172pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£6.95.
0 7100 0930 5

In his preface Alan Ereira, in refreshing contrast to the dust-jacket's absurd claim that "up till now little of the story has been known", describes his book as not a definitive history of the Invergordon Mutiny, but an account of what men who were there believed took place. This limited aim was dictated by the material used which, when it is not based on already published work or primary documentary sources, consists largely of the responses of nearly a hundred participants to requests for information from which Mr Ereira constructed a radio programme to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the mutiny. The actual events of September 1931 — the government's decision to reduce the pay of the part of a drive to stabilize a crumbling financial situation, the clumsiness with which the Admiralty handled the publication of the decision, and the disturbances which followed in the ships at Invergordon — were clearly established and analysed in Stephen Roskill's *Naval Policy Between the Wars*, Volume 2 (1976). His mastery chapter not only presents a closely documented narrative but also a trenchant analysis of the weaknesses of previous published work. But even Roskill admits that some details, for instance of what

took place at the meetings in the canteen ashore where the discontent with the pay cuts rose to the surface and grew into a determination to resist them, can never be fully understood because they can only be based on recollections recorded many years afterwards. The same can be said of the impossibility of establishing precisely what happened in the individual ships during the mutiny and who, if any, of the men constituted an identifiable leadership.

Ereira and his team of researchers have not overcome this inevitable handicap. Recollections of what happened to boys and young men fifty years ago, in circumstances of confusion which themselves must have made it difficult for participants to know what was happening, cannot be a firm foundation for accurate historical reconstruction. Although the author comments on this from time to time, he gradually builds up the general impression that, despite all the inconsistencies and improbabilities, he is producing an accurate version of what happened. The difficulty in assessing this claim is increased by the fact that he does not always clearly indicate whether his quotations are from oral or written testimony, and some are not attributed at all.

Ereira's one new documentary discovery, which he calls "stunning", is a reference among Admiral Dreyer's papers to Admiralty discussions of the use of force against the mutineers. It was inevitable that such action should be considered, but unfortunately Ereira fails to show how seriously it was contemplated and what ideas there were on how it

could have been implemented by some more realistic method than the bombardment by howitzers he does mention.

The evidence which Ereira has discovered, with its sometimes penetrating simplicity, does produce an impressionistic insight into the frustration, anger and confusion of men who, as he perceptively observes, were attempting the impossible, "an act of loyal disobedience... the attempt to take illegal action without breaking the bounds of legitimacy". It must have made an excellent radio programme but he of little help in clarifying the historical record.

Denys Brook-Hart's *20th Century British Marine Painting* (322pp. Antique Collector's Club, Church Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk. £25. 0 902028 90 1) is at once a history, an anthology and a reference book on its subject. Sixteen chapters describe the historical background and the successive periods of marine art in this century and country, the characteristics and techniques — media, palette, current use, etchings and prints — collecting marine art and its market values, and the Royal Society of Marine Artists. There are nearly three hundred photographic reproductions, thirty-eight of them in colour, with detailed captions; and finally a biographical index section on over 650 artists, ranging from Sir Mulholland Bone and Sir Frank Brangwyn to Rodney J. Burn, David Cobb, Roy Cross, Charles Dixon, Richard Evers, Derek Gardner, Richard Hilder, S. S. Lowry, Terence Storey, W. Eric Thorp and Edward Weisson.

within the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Not only have the unpublished papers of this last body been ignored, but so, too, it seems, have those of such pertinent figures as Austen Chamberlain, Lord Chotfield, Stanley Baldwin, Lord Lothian, Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Halifax, and Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith (who, as Minister of Agriculture, was much concerned with Commonwealth farming problems). While use has been made of Stephen Roskill's fine study of Hunkey, the latter's papers have not been consulted. Stranger still, no reference is made either to the published papers of Smuts or to Sir Alan Watt's works on the beginnings of Australian diplomacy.

Moreover, it is arguable that the author could have made a more significant contribution to Commonwealth studies had he extended the scope of his original doctoral work before issuing his findings in book form. Even if it had remained impossible for him to reach overseas archives in order to avail himself of, for example, the papers of Lord Bruce of Melbourne, he could from British sources alone have carried his examination beyond 1939, to, say, 1942-43. So many of the issues which were raised in the inter-war years (relations with the United States; the inserting of Dominions views into Whitehall discussions; the need, as perceived in London, to obtain greater Dominion support for Britain's colonial policies; and many more) were to come to a head during the war, that the cut-off point of September 1939, so obvious in some ways, may not have been the most appropriate one for the subject under discussion.

In short, Holland has provided a well-argued and persuasive study which contributes to our understanding of both Britain's inter-war policies and the development of the Commonwealth in general. Even on its own terms, however, the book is not quite as good as it should have been; nor is it as weighty as it might have been, with another couple of years' work. One puts it down, grateful but also somewhat disappointed — reactions which a good many have experienced concerning the Commonwealth itself over the years.

Captain Marsh

Captain Marsh has gone to work in a locked room on the second floor. He is not pleased by steps approaching.

We are close enough. Listen, he types with two fingers and barks at mistakes as if at insolent cabin-boys.

All winter he is marooned here by his own orders. An electric-fire and a whisky-bottle are his comforts.

He has not spoken to us in months though sometimes notes escape the room requesting steak or lamb-curry.

Nights when we can't sleep, we hear the clacking of his machine far up disturbing the pigeons on the rooftop.

What is his great vocation? When will he reveal this late crop, this surge that has replaced the sea?

We ask, make crude guesses, laugh. Sometimes we wait outside the room as he walks the boards as if in pain.

Matthew Sweeney

In all directions

By Lachlan Mackinnon

PAUL HERNADI (Editor):
What is Criticism?
321pp. Indiana University Press.
£10.50.
0 253 37733 1

The question is, as the twenty-three contributors agree, essentially unanswerable. What they offer instead is a series of tentative emphases, whose extreme points are the radical subjectivism of Stanley Fish on the one hand and, on the other, Wayne Booth's call for ethical and political criticisms as well as a revival of the higher journalism. Booth, in his demand for a criticism open to more than merely literary responsibilities, offers a way out of the dilemma into which Fish hopes further to drive us, but not a wholly satisfactory one. Murray Krieger raises the question absent in both cases, that of the canon.

Criticism's place is unproblematic when there is an agreed canon to be expounded. However, the last canon, Eliot's, is now in complete disarray and has been replaced by a plethora of syllabuses. As Mary Pratt reminds us, criticism has withdrawn to the academy; and become what Richard Ohmann described as a self-sustaining industry within a society

which appears not to need it, a laissez-faire circuit which masks the fight for tenure. The idea that literature may actually matter largely goes begging here — there is not a Leavisite in the house. The dissolution of the canon is accompanied by forces of which some contributors confess themselves already tired, forces which dissolve the ideas both of the author and of his authority.

A canon is a way of defining the present; we are that to which it leads. In literature, this means that the canon is responsive to contemporary work in an interplay between influence and redirection. There does not appear to be a writer in English who commands the authority which embodies and/or invents a canon, and in that absence critics are left with a past which makes increasingly less sense to them. The debate in this volume is intelligent and informative, but it will be concluded only by a fiat sounded in literature itself.

Spatial Form in Narrative, edited by Jeffrey R. Smith and Ann Douglas (280pp. Cornell University Press. £13.75. 0 8014 3375 3), contains an introduction and nine essays, including a retrospective one by Professor Joseph Frank himself, exploring the theory that has developed, in relation especially to narrative language and structure, and to reader perception, since Frank's influential 1945 article "Spatial Form in Modern Literature".

